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DECASUALIZATION OF DOCK LABOUR

DECASUALIZATION OF DOCK LABOUR

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PORT OF BRISTOL

By

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W. H. W.

INTRODUCTION

THERE is always an indefinable fascination about docks. They present a spectacle of constant change and animation. The big liner floats in silent majesty surrounded by noisy little tugs snorting and puffing in their efforts to guide her into port. Ships abound of different shapes and sizes, flying different flags and carrying strange cargoes of men and things. Old windjammers may be seen alongside steam-driven tramps suggestive of centuries of progress. The loading and unloading of cargoes sets in motion all kinds of activity: the shouts of men, the jangling of chains, the clamour of winches and the shunting of wagons. The atmosphere is pregnant with odours sent off from the spices of the East or the prairies of the West. Is it any wonder that many a young spirit roaming around the docks has acquired a wanderlust and felt the irresistible call of the sea?

A city with a port, therefore, is a centre of peculiar interest, and Bristol has the double attraction of being one of England's oldest cities as well as one of her oldest ports. In his delightful *History of the Port of Bristol* the late Mr. Charles Wells* has collected a fund of information which carries the reader back to Saxon times, when Bristol was second only to London as a shipping centre, and brings him down to the period just before the Great War. This *History* is full of incident and change, throwing interesting light upon the important part which the Port of Bristol has played in the changing fortunes of these islands. It tells of pioneers and pirates in the great days of exploration and discovery; it tells of trade in merchandise and slaves, of the beginning of steamships, of the rise of great liners and the rapid expansion of world shipping.

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* *A Short History of the Port of Bristol*, by Charles Wells. Arrowsmith, 1909.

Concealed beneath the glamour of a modern port with its past record there is a human chapter that is generally overlooked, except by the person with imagination. Such is the story of the life and conditions of the men who man the ships and the docker by whose efforts the cargoes are loaded and discharged. It is with the latter that the present narrative attempts to deal. We live in an age when much is heard of the docker and his problems, and it is well to remember, in the light of so much criticism, that most of our present-day troubles are the result of past neglect. Before the great dock strike in 1889 the public were ignorant of, and consequently indifferent to, the conditions under which the dock labourer spent his working life, while the few who were interested in his welfare could find little or no information upon which to base their demand for reform. As in many other directions, reform was born in strife. The attempts to hold up the nation's shipping by the withdrawal of labour aroused feelings of bitterness, but at the same time focused public opinion upon a great social evil. Just as the exposure of sweated conditions of labour in the East End of London finally led to the establishment of Trade Boards in 1909 for the protection of the sweated worker, so the exposure of evil conditions of labour in the great docks of the

Metropolis roused an insistent demand for the setting up of machinery for the protection of the docker. But evils which are the product of centuries cannot be remedied in a generation, even with the help of sympathetic rulers and enlightened legislation. The tragedy of dock labour is the creation of the casual worker, since the casual system carries with it a whole train of evils which demoralize the worker and ruin his domestic life. The value of modern experiments in the direction of decasualization does not consist solely in the improvement which they bring into the lives of the present-day dockers, but still more so in the fact that the influence of such reform will produce in subsequent generations better men and more efficient workers. Apart from a brief outline of the national problem, the present publication makes no claim to deal with the many schemes now in operation at the various British ports, but simply to place on record some of the important achievements accomplished at the Port of Bristol. At the same time, a study of the progress made in this direction at Bristol throws considerable light on the general problem and affords help to those who are attempting to find a satisfactory solution in other centres. The creditable nature of the work done by the Bristol Port Labour Committee is clearly shown by the continuous reference made to it in the recent Ministry of Labour Port Labour Inquiry Report (1931).*

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* 36–103, H.M. Stationery Office. 1s. 6d.

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THE NATIONAL PROBLEM

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Decasualization of Dock Labour

CHAPTER I

THE NATIONAL PROBLEM

THE essential evil of casual labour is the creation of the casual worker, and this evil will continue so long as it is possible for the casual labourer to pick up odd jobs around the docks without the permission of some authority. In the absence of any organization for the control and engagement of labour, the docks attract the casualties from other trades, as well as a heterogeneous mass of low-grade, unskilled labour which has never experienced the healthy discipline of steady employment. For such reasons a floating unemployed population, including many of the undesirable and unemployable elements in the country, is usually found hovering around the ports without any chance of constant work. Is it any wonder that such conditions like a stagnant pool soon breed human pests who carry disease into the whole life of the community? The following description by a foreman in the London Dock Companies' service conveys an impression of the conditions which prevailed before reforms were introduced: " The position of a taking-on foreman " (before the preference system) " was an extremely dangerous occupation, and while he was thus employed it was advisable to look after his money and valuables, as well as himself; in fact, it was necessary to know the art of self-defence. There was a place in London Docks which was called the cage, where men were taken on after the first call. When I went there for the first time I was astounded. Firstly the constable unbarred the door, then a gigantic roar went up from hundreds of throats calling my name. A long platform, about a foot from the ground, was erected upon which I stood to give out tickets. A great mass of faces and hands through iron bars appeared before me fighting and struggling, so much so that it was difficult to detect which face the hand belonged to. Some would be struggling to secure as many tickets as possible so that they might be able to sell them to other men who had not been fortunate enough to get one."* Happily these days are over, although much still remains to be done.

In attempting to deal with such a problem, it is necessary to distinguish between the character of the work done by the docker and the system by which he is employed. It will never be possible to overcome the casual elements in the work, but that is no excuse for not attempting to improve the haphazard conditions of employment. The volume of work at the docks depends upon a variety of factors which are subject to constant fluctuations. The movement of tides causes daily changes in the movement of ships. The changing seasons in all countries produce changes in the volume and character of freights. Weather conditions also interfere with regular movements, especially in the case of sailing ships and tramps. The problem, therefore, is one of attempting to co-ordinate irregular demands which are largely uncontrollable and at the same time to adjust the supply of labour. A further complication arises from the fact, generally overlooked, that a large proportion of the work of loading and discharging cargoes is highly skilled and varied in character. The popular notion that a docker's chief requisite is brute force is soon dispelled by watching the men at work. Groups which have specialized in certain sections not only become highly expert, but develop certain muscles which enable them to accomplish the task in half the time of others who, though much stronger physically, are less experienced at the job. The adaptability of certain men for particular jobs has raised new problems arising out of their natural unwillingness to undertake a different class of work when their own special skill is not in demand. Nevertheless, such difficulties tend to diminish as the organization of labour improves. The problem of decasualization, therefore, is twofold. First, it means the elimination of the floating surplus of labour by a reduction in the supply available to meet the requirements of the port, and secondly, the organization of that supply so as to make it adjustable to meet the fluctuating demands due to natural causes, and the varied character of the work of the port. The first is chiefly a problem of registration, while the second is mainly one of increasing mobility.

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* *Unemployment—a Problem of Industry*, by Sir William Beveridge, (1930 edn.), page 87 (footnote).

The first registration scheme was established in 1912 at the Port of Liverpool as the result of the increasing need for some form of decasualization. As in other directions, the War gave an impetus to greater organization at the ports. During the War Military Service Committees were set up at the different ports for the purpose of selecting and maintaining an adequate supply of labour while recruiting was in progress. The work of these Committees was efficiently carried out, and there was practically no unemployment in the industry during that period. With the return to peace the situation completely changed, and difficulties arose when demobilization set in. It became necessary to set up machinery to prevent the docks becoming swamped by the unemployed from other trades. In 1919 an inquiry was instituted by a committee presided over by the Hon. Mr. Justice Roche, the outcome of which was the establishment of the Port of London Registration Scheme in 1920. In the same year, under the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, a Court of Enquiry was instituted, of which Lord Shaw was Chairman, to consider a claim for higher wages and better conditions of work for all port workers throughout the country. The eloquent and convincing manner in which the men's case was stated and defended by Mr. Ernest Bevin, the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, aroused considerable public interest, and resulted in the admission of the workers' demand, which included a minimum wage of 16s. per day. In conceding the claim important comments were made on the whole question of decasualization. The view was expressed that "labour frequently or constantly under-employed is injurious to the interests of the workers, the ports and the public, and that it is discreditable to society. It undermines all security and is apt to undermine all self-respect upon the workers' part. It is only amongst those who have sunk very far and whom the system itself may have demoralized that it can be accepted as a working substitute for steady and assured employment. In one sense it is a convenience to authorities and employers whose requirements are at the mercy of storms and tides and unforeseen casualties, to have a reservoir of unemployment which can be easily tapped as the need emerges for a supply of labour. If men were merely the spare parts of an industrial machine this callous reckoning might be appropriate. . . . . The one issue is as to what practical means can be adopted of readily providing labour while avoiding casual and unsocial conditions." The two chief recommendations were (*a*) the need for a system of registration, and (*b*) approval of the principle of maintenance of unemployed workers. The Court emphasized the close connection between the concession of a high minimum wage and the need for registration, a point it is important to bear in mind in face of the subsequent criticism that whereas the high rates were attracting more labour to the docks little had been done to control and limit the supply. That the Court recognized the wage claim to be relatively high is indicated by the following paragraph from the Report :—

> " It was strongly contended that the minimum now to be set up would be pointed to as the ground for claims in other industries. This may be the case, no doubt, but the following consideration has to be kept in view ; dock labour is in a very large proportion uncertain labour. The employees in that branch of industry often run the risk of finding themselves without work at the end of any day or even half-day. This raises the whole question of

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> casual labour, and it has serious relations to the claim of the workers. This is said for this reason; that, as will be presently explained, the Court is of opinion that the time has arrived when the industry out of which the payment of wages will come must also bear a charge in respect to maintenance of unemployed casuals. The amount of that charge will no doubt depend upon the energy and enlightenment with which the casual problem is tackled by all concerned. With such energy and enlightenment it may be reduced to small and vanishing proportions and expense. But meantime, the position even on the point of finance is one which has to be faced and which enters into the problem of general wage fixing."

It is clear from such statements that the Court intended that immediately following the rise in wage rates, measures should be taken to acquire control of the labour supply. In this way it was anticipated that under-employment would be reduced to a minimum. But while the wage award became operative at once, disputes and discussion caused delay in setting up machinery for regulation. The Ministry of Labour intervened and, by providing an independent Chairman and offering such technical assistance as was necessary, a Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of the late Sir Donald Maclean. The Committee was set up in accordance with Clause 9 of the Terms of Agreement of 20th February, 1924, between the National Council of Port Labour Employers on behalf of its members and the Transport and General Workers' Union on its own behalf and on behalf of the Unions associated with it.

The Clause in question is as follows:—

> " 9. Decasualization. — The parties to this Agreement agree to appoint a Sub-Committee (the Minister of Labour to appoint an independent Chairman and supply such technical assistance as may be necessary) for the purpose of developing and strengthening the system of registration, and to examine the proposal for a guaranteed week with a view to arriving at an agreement to give effect to the Shaw Report."

Meantime, registration schemes had been established in Liverpool, London and Bristol, and the experience gained at these centres was surveyed by the Committee. The Maclean Committee laid down as the two main principles which should govern any scheme the protection of the claims of the genuine docker and the adjusting of the labour supply to meet the requirements of the port. It also stated the lines along which action could be taken and collected much useful data. As a result of this inquiry attempts were made to set up schemes in every port in the country. The progress made has been summarized in the Report* of a second inquiry, also under the Chairmanship of Sir Donald Maclean. The terms of reference were as follows :—

> " To inquire into employment and unemployment in the port transport services of Great Britain and to make recommendations thereon, with special reference to decasualization and the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme in its application to port transport workers."

As stated above, the first scheme was set up in

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* Ministry of Labour Port Labour Inquiry, 1931. H.M. Stationery Office, 36–103. 1s. 6d.

Liverpool in 1912. The system is now in operation in the following thirty-four ports :—

Ardrossan.
Ayr and Troon.
Barrow-in-Furness.
Barry.
Bristol.
Cardiff and Penarth.
Cumberland Ports.
Dundee.
Falmouth.
Fowey.
Garston.
Gloucester and Sharpness.
Goole.
Grangemouth and Bo'ness.
Greenock.
Grimsby.
Harwich.
Hull.
Ipswich.
Leith.
Liverpool.
London.
Manchester.
Middlesbrough.
Newhaven.
Newport.
Penzance.
Plymouth.
Port Talbot.
Preston.
Southampton.
Swansea.
Tyne and Wear.
Weymouth.

The schemes together are supported by over 1,000 port transport undertakings, and include nearly 90,000 workers. Registration schemes are in operation in the major ports with the exception of Glasgow. The period is still too short and the evidence too limited upon which to generalize, but the following observations are suggested by a perusal of the available data, and may serve to throw light upon the advance which has been made at Bristol, which is referred to in greater detail later on.

There are interesting differences in the methods used at the various ports, as well as in the degrees of progress achieved, and these would seem to be due to two main causes, one material and the other human. On the material side, it is obvious that a port like London, covering an extensive field with enclosed dock areas having little mobility between them, presents very different problems from a port such as Avonmouth, which is limited in extent and completely enclosed. Again, differences in the character of the trade cause differences in the fluctuation of the demand for labour. Regular sailings, such as are carried on by the transatlantic liners, create a more or less regular demand for workers compared with the movements of tramp cargo ships, which are necessarily more erratic. Again, tidal movements affect the accessibility of ports. Large centres like Hamburg and Rotterdam, where decasualization has been carried to its most advanced stage, enjoy natural advantages by being navigable at all states of the tide, and are constructed to facilitate rapid discharge and loading. Such illustrate the variation existing in the geographical and other material factors calling for corresponding differences in methods of treatment. These differences create serious difficulties, but they are gradually diminishing in face of organized effort and greater experience.

The cause of the failures and the chief reason for varying success is mostly associated with the human factor. In all branches of industry discussions concerning wages, employment and maintenance are most affected by the character of the prevailing industrial relationships, and this is particularly true of the dock industry. There is the question of the relations between the employers and the men, between the men's national and local officials, and the relations of these parties to the members of the Committee set up to administer the registration scheme. It is probably true to say that the measure of success achieved at the various ports largely corresponds to the degree to which the principle of collective bargaining has been enforced loyally and sympathetically by all parties, just as failure can be invariably traced to the absence of such relations. The experience already gained since the establishment of registration schemes shows that this is a matter of vital importance. Lack of co-operation takes different forms. Employers seldom show active opposition, but schemes have failed on account of their indifference or negative attitude. The employer is not likely to suffer from any shortage of labour supply even though there are no arrangements for controlling it. In fact, since the object of decasualization is to eliminate a floating surplus of workers, the likelihood is that in the absence of any organization of labour supply each employer will find himself with a surplus at his own call stand or starting point. If the employer only considers his immediate requirements he is not likely to reflect upon the more distant advantages of decasualization by which the general standard and efficiency of the docker will be raised. Further, in this short-sighted view he will secure support from a substantial following amongst the men. There are always a large number of regular dockers, well-known to the foremen and skilled in particular jobs, who under any conditions can rely on a reasonable amount of employment. Many of this group have a natural fear that registration might mean a loss of liberty or a disclosure of earnings or a levelling out of employment. At the other extreme, there is always a floating fringe of workers who are content with an odd day's work either to supplement other earnings or secure a claim to unemployment relief. This class oppose decasualization because it would involve their elimination altogether.

But quite apart from the apathy of the employers and the fear of the workers, obstacles to successful working have arisen in connection with existing trade union organizations. Sometimes this is due to strained relations between the employers and the men's officials, at other times between the national union and local branch officials of the men, while there may arise the question of the relations of both groups towards the Committee set up to administer the registration scheme. A study of some of the disputes which have arisen throws interesting light on the whole question of collective bargaining. When a registration scheme is established the Committee set up to administer it usually consists of an equal number of representatives from both sides. For the purpose of making such appointments both employers and men are usually organized into an electing body. In some ports the employers have failed to secure sufficient co-operation amongst themselves for this purpose, which has brought about the failure of the scheme, while in other instances the necessity of setting up such an organization has greatly strengthened the spirit of co-operation, both amongst themselves and in their dealings with the dockers. On the workers' side, the existing Trade Union organization is used for the purpose of electing representatives, and in this way its influence is strengthened. But the registration scheme is not administered directly by organizations of both parties. The Committee represents such bodies and invariably co-operates with them, but a deadlock has been created in certain areas by the representatives of the men insisting upon making membership of the Union compulsory for all registered workers. It is recognized generally that in the efficient administration of a registration scheme it is very desirable that all the men should be members of the Union just as all the employers in the port should be a party to the scheme, but attempts to bring this about by compulsion may prove fatal to success. Like many other features of our English life and constitution, what looks like a paradox is based on a sound instinct. Conciliation is the surest way to success in the settlement of industrial disputes. Compulsory arbitration usually proves to be impracticable, but it may be rendered unnecessary by the adoption of conciliatory methods.

But the problem may be one of strained relations between the representatives of the national and local Unions. This seldom happens, but when it does arise it usually proves fatal to progress. If the relations between the local employers and local Union officials are amicable this, under certain circumstances, may operate against registration machinery. The employers may be either hostile or indifferent to registration, and therefore content to deal with any difficulty through the local Union officials. The local officials are inclined to support such an attitude, fearing lest the setting up of a Committee should weaken their powers of direct negotiation. Besides, in the absence of a Committee, so long as preference is given to members of the Union by the foremen when engaging men, the control of numbers will remain entirely in the hands of the local officials. This attitude explains some of the opposition and delay in setting up registration machinery. Problems arise with reference to fixing numbers and qualifications. In certain instances the local Union officials refused to support registration unless all members of the Union were registered, and so insisted upon such membership as the line of demarcation. If this condition was not accepted they felt that their influence was being weakened, and that of the national Union officials being strengthened, since they were generally strong advocates of registration. On the other hand, if the relations between the local Union officials and the employers were strained, the Union men were disposed to support the establishment of a scheme believing this to be a means of enhancing their influence, a view which was generally justified by subsequent events. Where the employers recognize the Union as the recruiting ground for registered dockers, and the Union co-operates without insisting upon compulsory membership as a *sine qua non* of registration, the way is clear for setting up the machinery for registration, and success chiefly depends upon the continuance of such co-operation. It is very greatly to the credit of the industry that so many schemes have been firmly established in such a short time, an achievement which proves the existence of wise leadership on both sides.

The main conclusion to which these observations lead is that by means of registration one of the chief obstacles to decasualization is removed provided there is determination and goodwill on both sides. Employers must be alive to the gravity of the evils produced by casual labour, while the Trade Unionist must sink his prejudices, whether against his mates or the employers, if the conditions of the docker are to be raised to those of other craftsmen. This is not a matter of abstract arguments, but calls for the application of trained intelligence and goodwill.

An important step was taken in September, 1931, following upon the recommendation of the Port

Labour Enquiry Report, by the establishment of a Standing Advisory Committee on Registration and Decasualization. Representatives to this Committee were elected by the National Joint Council for Dock Labour, which represents both employers and workers. The first Committee were composed of the following :—

Employers.	*Workpeople.*
Sir Alfred Booth, Bart.	Mr. Ernest Bevin.
Mr. Charles Cullen.	Mr. T. W. Condon, O.B.E.
Mr. W. Awstun Jones.	Mr. G. E. Farmery.
Mr. C. M. Jenkin Jones.	Mr. D. Hillman.
Mr. C. S. Page.	Mr. C. Jones.
Mr. S. C. Parkin.	Mr. S. E. Lofthouse.
Mr. Basil Sanderson.	Mr. D. S. Milford.
Mr. J. S. Spencer.	Mr. H. O. Pugh.
Mr. W. L. Wrightson.	Mr. J. Tarbit.

Office accommodation and other assistance is provided by the Ministry of Labour, who also appoint the Secretary. The present Secretary is Mr. D. T. John.

The work of this Committee is outlined in the suggestions made by the Port Labour Enquiry Report when they put forward the proposal :—

> We consider that the Committee should establish and maintain direct contact with the responsible parties in each port and give particular attention to the following objects :—
>
> 1. The establishment and development of joint registration schemes in all ports.
>
> 2. The systematic and regular revision of registers and arrangement for regular consideration of employment records.

3. Provision for the recruitment of labour.

4. The establishment of uniform methods of compiling statistics from all ports, and the collection of information showing accurately the progress of decasualization in the industry as a whole. Representations to the Ministry of Labour with the object of securing accurate official labour statistics relating to the industry.

5. The establishment and development of systems of central or surplus stands or other means of securing the best use of available registered labour in all ports, in accordance with local needs.

6. Detailed observations of the operation of schemes with the object of making local experience available for general use.

The Committee accepted these recommendations as their term of reference, with the result that two interesting reports have since been issued by the Standing Advisory Committee, the first covering the period from September, 1931, to December, 1932, and the second for the year 1933. These reports afford the most reliable and extensive information yet available concerning decasualization in this country.

WAR PERIOD

CHAPTER II

WAR PERIOD

THE first serious attempts outside of Liverpool to regulate the supply of dock labour were undertaken during the War. In June, 1916, a Port Labour Committee was set up at Bristol, the chief object of which was to facilitate recruiting while retaining an adequate supply of labour to meet the requirements of the port. Representatives of the Forces and the National Service Department took an important part in the discussions of that time, since practically every problem which cropped up was related to the prevailing shortage of labour caused by the increasing demand for recruits to the army. In this respect it is interesting to observe that nearly all the important measures adopted then to overcome a shortage of men are strikingly similar to many of the schemes at present in operation for reducing the surplus, such as establishing some record of work, selection of men with dock experience, increasing mobility between the different kinds of work so as to reduce the volume of labour required. On the other hand, problems of maintenance and unemployment benefit did not arise during the War, since there was no appreciable amount of unemployment on account of the prevailing shortage of workers. The following analysis of quarterly returns at this period shows a very high rate of employment :—

EXCHANGE OF BOOKS FOR QUARTER ENDING 30TH MARCH, 1918.

	No.	Days Possible.	Days worked.	Per-centage.	Sundays and Bank Holidays.	Days at Other Work.	Days Reported Sick.
Permanent men holding P.L. Cards	353	27,190	26,606	97·85	360	—	119
Casual men holding P.L. Cards	1,655	127,286	103,854	81·59	1,383	1,621	1,582
Men under and over Military Age	2,162	169,260	125,853	74·35	1,462	1,270	2,196
Totals	4,170	323,736	256,313	79·17	3,205	2,891	3,897

Another advantage arising from wartime conditions was the existence of some measure of national control in general. This is illustrated by the following letter:—

Ministry of Shipping,
St. James Park, S.W. 1.
6th September, 1917.

Sir,

Bristol Port Labour Committee.

In reply to your letter of the 5th inst. I write to say that every endeavour is made to ensure as regular a flow of traffic at the ports as is possible, and that this point will be kept in view as regards Avonmouth. The present arrangements governing the arrival of shipping do not, however, make it practicable to avoid sharp fluctuations of work at the ports, and moreover, decisions as to the discharge of ships at particular ports must in all events be contingent upon the capacity to receive traffic and to dispose of it promptly.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
L. A. P. Warner,
Director of Ports Branch.

Although the overture of the Bristol Commitee did not meet with much success it is interesting to know their views, and it is not inconceivable that the final solution of the problem of decasualization may necessitate co-operative action, not only within the various ports, but also some attempt at better regulation of dock work through the national co-operation of the shipping interests.

As early as October, 1916, at the sixth meeting of the Committee, a discussion took place on the best methods of attaining a record of work, and it was suggested that the Port Labour Committee should issue a book for this purpose, each book to last for one quarter and then be renewed. If it was found that men had not been working regularly they were to be called up before the Committee who would consider cancelling their exemptions from military service. In November, 1917, a more permanent scheme for the issue of Port Labour Record Books was approved, and rules drawn up.* It is interesting to compare this scheme with the changes introduced to meet post-War conditions. In these early days the object was to facilitate recruitment of men who would maintain the work of the Port efficiently and to eliminate the slackers, whereas post-War schemes aim at preserving the industry to the regular docker. Another significant feature of this first scheme is the absence of any reference to the question of maintenance or unemployment benefit, questions which were to loom large in post-War discussions. Then the army was always ready to absorb any who were turned away from the docks.

Many of the questions which engaged the attention of the Committee during this period were necessarily of a transitory character and disappeared with the end of the War, but the experience gained was invaluable to those who had to build up machinery of a more permanent type. Above all, the need for co-operation between different sides under the stress of war conditions goes far to explain the success of later developments. During the War the interests of employer and worker generally coincided, as they had to work together in carrying out the regulations laid down by the Government authorities, and this naturally made for a better understanding of each other's standpoint when they were bargaining on different sides. The period was by no means free from disputes, but these did not arise so much from a conflict of interests between employers and workers, but rather from the difficulties which confronted the industry due to the increasing demands of the authorities arising from the stress of war.

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* See Appendix I.

One important innovation was made in June, 1918, by the appointment of a special officer at the Port. Since the creation of this post later on led to the appointment of the present Labour Inspector, the following letter from the Ministry of Labour is worthy of being quoted in full :—

> " I am informed that the Port Transit Executive Committee in view of the exceptional rushes of work on the Port of Bristol, incident to the convoy systems, have suggested to the Ministry the advisability of appointing an Officer to be charged with the duty of seeing that the fullest use is made of civilian labour in the Port ; such officer to act also as adviser to the Local Port and Transit Executive Committee in deciding whether or not such a shortage of civilian labour exists as to warrant the employment of men of the Transport Workers' Battalion. The Minister of Labour will be glad to have the observations of the Bristol Port Labour Committee on this suggestion, and you are requested to bring it before the Committee at an early date."

This letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Port Labour Committee, was considered at a meeting on the 12th June, 1918. It was explained that while the initiative had come from the Port and Transit Executive Committee, the appointment, if made, should be made by the Port Labour Committee. The officer appointed would be the officer of the latter, and would be paid through them by the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour.

After discussion, the following resolution was passed :—

> " That this Committee approved of the appointment of Mr. ——— to carry out the duties of special officer of the Port of Bristol as required by the Port and Transit Committee to be charged with the above-mentioned duties. His salary to be £5 per week, and the appointment to date from 27th May, 1918. He will be a whole-time officer and devote the whole of his time to the above duties."

It was further resolved that the Chairman (Mr. D. Ross-Johnson), Mr. E. Bevin and the Secretary be requested to draw up the full conditions and duties of the officer for an agreement to be signed.

The economies which were imposed, following the report of the Geddes Committee, included the abolition of the payment of the salary of this official by the Treasury. Bristol was the only port which continued the office at its own expense.

POST-WAR DEVELOPMENTS—CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

CHAPTER III

POST WAR DEVELOPMENTS—CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

ON the 11th November, 1918, a meeting of representatives of Port Labour Committees was summoned, which met in London. Bristol was represented by the Chairman, Mr. D. Ross-Johnson, and Mr. Ernest Bevin. It was decided that Port Labour Committees should remain in existence to deal with demobilization matters affecting dock labour at the ports, with the proviso that their constitution should be amended so as to secure equal representation of employers and employed. It was also decided to set up a Central Advisory Committee consisting of twelve representatives of labour and twelve representatives of employers to co-ordinate the work of Port Labour Committees and advise the Minister of Labour. The two representatives from Bristol were elected members of the Central Advisory Committee. A further indication of the change from war- to peace-time conditions was the withdrawal from the Bristol Committee of the representatives of the National Service Department, which took place on the 19th December, 1918. From that date the work of the Bristol Port Labour Committee was carried on by a Committee consisting of five representatives nominated by the employers and five nominated by the workers, all of whom with an impartial Chairman were appointed by the Ministry. The constitution of Port Labour Committees throughout the country has undergone numerous changes since then, but Bristol has the unique distinction of being the only Committee which has retained its identity throughout. The question of reorganization arose on various occasions. On 26th August, 1925, following certain recommendations of the Committee set up under the Chairmanship of the late Sir Donald Maclean to which reference has been made above, the question was discussed at Bristol. The Chairman explained that, as a result of the recommendation of the Maclean Committee, Port Registration Committees were being set up in various ports throughout the country, and that it was desired to bring the few Port Labour Committees which had continued to function into line with the new constitutions. The chief difference would be that members of the Port Registration Committee would be appointed direct by Associations of Port Employers and Workers instead of being nominated by such associations and appointed by the Minister of Labour, while the Chairman would be nominated by the Committee instead of being appointed by the Minister. After discussion, decision was postponed until fuller information was available as to the probable effects of the proposed changes on the work of the Committee. At a subsequent meeting held on 3rd November, 1925, it was unanimously decided to take no action, and the conclusion was reached that no useful purpose would be served by forming a Port Registration Committee, while it was in the interests of both employers and men that the Port Labour Committee should continue as at present constituted. Three years later, at a meeting held on 25th September, 1928, the question was again raised on the occasion of the resignation of the Chairman, Mr. D. Ross-Johnson, C.B.E. The previous decision was reaffirmed and the view expressed by both sides that a Port Registration Committee would not be nearly so effective locally as a Port Labour Committee, and the hope expressed that the question would not be raised by the Department. The following resolution was then passed :—

> " That this Committee, having received intimation from the Chairman of his impending resignation, desire to take the opportunity of reiterating their considered opinion that no change should be made in the status of the Committee (*i.e.* that the Port Labour Committee should not be reconstituted as a Port Registration Committee), and therefore request to be allowed to nominate a successor to the Chairmanship for appointment by the Minister of Labour."

REGISTRATION

CHAPTER IV

REGISTRATION

The Port Labour Committee was not very long in existence before it had to take steps to obtain some employment record of the dock workers. Such a record is essential to any subsequent attempt to bring about decasualization by means of registration. During the War the problem was simplified by the prevailing shortage of labour. There was no floating surplus of unemployed men such as collect around the docks during periods of trade depression. At the same time it was necessary to reduce the number of dockers to the minimum required in order to meet increasing pressure from the recruiting authorities, and this led to the adoption of measures some of which are still in operation as a means of reducing the surplus in peace times. But one of the major problems which confronted Port Labour Committees after the War was to decide upon the number of dockers necessary to cope with the work in the ports. Once this was decided, the second difficulty was to discover ways and means of selecting suitable men. On 28th February, 1919, a Conference was held in Bristol at the offices of the Dockers' Union: Mr. E. Bevin represented the workers, Mr. R. P. Bailey the employers, and the Secretary of the Committee and Manager of the Labour Exchange were also present. After discussion, draft rules of procedure were agreed upon with reference to registration and out-of-work benefit. This was subsequently submitted to a meeting of the Port Labour Committee, and a scheme was agreed upon which came into operation on 31st March, 1919.* The method adopted was the one already in use at the ports by which registration was effected through the issue of metal tallies which entitled the holder to apply for work. By this means the Committee were able to make a serious start in their efforts towards decasualization, and for a time the scheme worked with creditable success. After the collapse of the trade boom in 1920, however, the surplus of unemployed men around the docks rapidly increased, and it became necessary to amend the scheme on account of new difficulties which had arisen. On 3rd June, 1920, a Sub-Committee was appointed to examine the existing register and to build up a new register of dock workers with a view to the establishment of a scheme of provision against unemployment. The report of this Committee throws considerable light upon the difficulties which had to be overcome at the time and contains proposals which finally led to the adoption of the scheme in operation at the present time. The following extracts from the report refer to the more important questions dealt with :—

> 1. The needs of the Port have been carefully considered and it is recommended that the following

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* See Appendix II.

men will be required to form the " pool " of labour for the normal work of the Port :—

Avonmouth	1,800
Bristol and Portishead ..	1,000
Floating Surplus	200
	3,000

This does not include permanent staff.

2. After discussing various methods of finding how many of the existing Tally Holders were actually engaged upon dock work, it was decided that " every firm engaging labour, whether permanent or casual, be requested by the Port Labour Committee to render to the Secretary, over a period of twelve working days, a list quoting the tally numbers and names of all casual men in their employ ; also one list giving the tally or certificate numbers and names of all their permanent employees."

It was also decided to call upon dockers unemployed during the period of twelve working days to register the fact, quoting their tally numbers to the Surplus Stand at Avonmouth and Bristol.

3. Amongst other questions considered were the advisability of withdrawing tallies of permanent men in exchange for a system of certificates, this principle being agreed to ; a system for the exchange of tallies and the procedure to be adopted when application is made for the issue of a tally.

In the light of the experience gained, the Committee became more and more convinced that a registration system which did not provide reliable information as to the nature and extent of employment obtained by each man could never afford a basis upon which the efficient regulation of the labour supply of the Port could be founded. It became more and more apparent that large numbers of men were holding tallies and exchanging them at the proper periods, but were employed in other industries, and were not normally available for dock work. These factors eventually led the Committee in 1924 to substitute employment record books for the metal tallies. These books were stamped by the employers with a distinctive stamp in respect of each day's employment, and therefore provided a running record of the individual employment of each registered worker. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to ensure that in future the issue and exchange of registration books would be made on neutral ground and by representatives of both sides of the Committee.

Two years later, owing to the progressive reduction in the numbers of registered men, it was thought advisable to establish a reserve pool of labour which would be available in periods of shortage, and from which new recruits could be enrolled. This group was known as Group B, while the first preference men are designated Group A. In this manner machinery has gradually been built up by which entrance to the industry is effectively controlled and decasualization is being achieved. The present rules, as finally amended, are given in the Appendix,* but the system as presently operating may be described briefly. The Port Labour Committee is appointed by the Minister of Labour on nominations submitted to him. It consists of a panel of five persons representing the Employers' Labour Association and five representatives of the Transport and General Workers' Union. The Manager of the Dock Employment Exchange acts as

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* See Appendix IV.

Secretary. The number of firms who stamp registration books is approximately 100, and every employer of dock labour, whether a member of the employers' organization or not, carries out the regulations. All registered men must be members of the Union. The general scheme includes all casual workers whose wages are governed by the National Dock Agreements (other than certain licensed boatmen). Permanent dock employees are not included. Books are issued to registered casual workers showing the holder's name, age, address and registration number. At first the man's usual occupation was inserted, but this has since been deleted, as it conveyed the impression to the men that they were entitled to confine their activities to a particular grade of work. No man who is not in possession of a book is engaged until all available and efficient registered men are engaged. The books are stamped with an official stamp by the employer in respect of each day's work. They are collected by the employer's representative at each engagement and retained till the completion of the work for which the man is engaged. Special machinery has been set up to deal with cases of misconduct. Every six months all the registration books are exchanged, and no fresh book is issued to any man who cannot satisfy the Committee as to his reason for not attaining a reasonable amount of work. Men guilty of misdemeanours are also dealt with by the Committee. All registered men constitute what is known as Group A and are given black books. In addition there is a second group, Group B, which constitutes a reserve pool from which experienced dock labour can be supplied. Group B also affords some protection to unregistered men who have been engaged in dock labour during periods of shortage in the past. This group, which is small in number, receive green books, and are engaged at the Call Stands at Avonmouth and the Surplus Stand at the City Docks after all the Group A men present have been placed, and before any unregistered men are taken on.* As the result of the six monthly exchange of books, important data is collected illustrating the operation of the scheme which is discussed later.

An important feature of the Bristol scheme is the procedure adopted to maintain an effective registration record. A description of the machinery will be found in the Appendix. In practice it is found to be operating successfully. It is an illuminating experience to attend the proceedings when the books are being exchanged. For four hours daily during the course of a week a Sub-Committee consisting of the Secretary of the Employers' Association, along with another member of the Committee who is a registered casual dock worker, interview all registered men. The Chairman has a set of index cards which shows each man's record of work since he first received a book, so that in event of the current six months' record being poor, a comparison with the past can be made at a glance. In the majority of cases the record is either satisfactory or a satisfactory reason is given for a poor return such as sickness or incapacity. In such instances the old book is initialled and a new one issued by the clerks engaged for the purpose. In a limited number of instances, where the record or the reason given is not altogether satisfactory, a warning is given and the case noted. The remainder with bad records are then called up before a special meeting of the Sub-Committee, who investigate each case in the presence of the individual. Such a tribunal presents a striking picture of the vicissitudes of a docker's life which it is impossible to convey in print. The feature which strikes the visitor most is the strange varieties of human nature which come before him. Some of the men are cheery, some depressed, some are witty, some are bitter, some are neat and well-fed, and others are shabby and dilapidated in appearance. The following are a few typical examples of cases dealt with by the Sub-Committee :—

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* The Group B scheme was wound up on 28th March, 1934. 140 Group B men who had obtained a reasonable amount of dock work were transferred to Group A. The remainder, numbering about 130, were transferred to the general pool of the unemployed at the Labour Exchange. The Committee agreed to a definite scheme of recruiting in order to counterbalance the increasing average age of the docker. The following extracts from the Minutes of the Main Committee, held on the 27th February, 1934, describe the recruiting policy now in operation :

1. That the number of registered casual men is sufficient for the present normal labour requirements of the Port.

2. Having regard to the serious increase in the average age of the registered men, and with the object of maintaining the labour efficiency of the Port, the Committee will take steps to ensure a steady flow of suitable recruits.

3. For the period March to December, 1934, the number of men to be registered is to be equal to the number of current Group " A " Registration books withdrawn or cancelled during that period.

4. The number of recruits to be registered in each subsequent year to be determined by the Main Committee in January of each year.

5. The present regulations governing the entry of sons of deceased or retired dock workers, within eight weeks of death or retirement, to be continued.

6. All other things being equal, preference will be given to applicants who are the sons of permanent or casual dock workers.

7. All applications will be dealt with solely on the merits of the applicant without regard as to whether he is a nominee of the Association or of the Union.

8. All new entrants to be issued with monthly permits for a period of three months from the date of entry. If they prove satisfactory in all respects during this probationary period they will be admitted to full registration.

(*a*) Prematurely aged men who do not appear to be "worth the money."

(*b*) The man who has grown accustomed to following one class of work and who is reluctant to tread fresh ground.

(*c*) The man who generally follows one class of work or one employer, and who will not accept other work unless " called by name."

(*d*) The Sea Lawyer who resents any questions and who imagines that he can get round the Committee by writing to his Member of Parliament.

(*e*) The man with a mental complex imagining the employer is up against him and who thinks he cannot do the job. This type is often associated with domestic trouble.

(*f*) The man who resents discipline and imagines the Committee is a self-appointed body with no power to withdraw a book.

By such methods at Bristol a system is gradually being evolved for controlling numbers and maintaining efficiency. One of the most promising features is that in operating this machinery all parties are gaining a closer knowledge of each other, and reliable data is being regularly accumulated. In the course of interviews it is noticeable to a visitor that most of the men are known personally to the members of the Committee and are usually addressed by name. There is an atmosphere of candour throughout the proceedings so that both sides put forward their views freely and, except in a few instances, without bitterness. Humour characterizes most of the criticisms advanced by the men. Regular contact under such conditions must either lead to complete failure or greater progress. The latter is the more likely outcome and is certainly true of Bristol. The human factor, instead of being ignored, is a prominent feature of all that is taking place, and this is probably the major cause of the success already achieved.

There are a few simple but effective checks upon any attempts at evading the truth. From the returns a record is shown of the days on which unregistered and Group B men are employed. On such days a registered man has no excuse for being unemployed if he has presented himself, unless he can prove that he was refused work in preference to these others. In such a case the matter is taken up with the employer of the foreman, and if the charge is proved it is considered a serious violation of the regulations and is dealt with accordingly. In connection with the administration of unemployment benefit, close co-operation takes place between the Committee and the Labour Exchange officials so as to prevent any abuse of the scheme. At Avonmouth there is an Exchange Office for signing the book within a short distance of the Central Call Stand, and at the City Docks a new Dock Employment Exchange is used as the Surplus Stand. This makes it possible for workers who are unable to obtain work to prove unemployment as soon as the call is over.

One of the chief advantages of registration is the opportunity it provides for collecting data from which it is possible to ascertain how the scheme is working and how far it is helping towards decasualization. The following tables have been completed from the statistical returns made at each six-monthly exchange of books :—

TABLE I.

BRISTOL PORT LABOUR COMMITTEE.

ANALYSIS OF REGISTRATION BOOKS. 1924–33.

Age Groups of Men.	Number of Group " A " Books Exchanged each Half-year.												Group "B."	
	1933.		1932.		1931.		1930.	1929.	1928.	1927.	1926.	1925.	1933.	1931.
	Sep.	Mar.	Sep.	Mar.	Sep.	Mar.	Sep.	Sep.	Sep.	Sep.	Sep.	Sep.	Sep.	Sep.
Under 20 years ..	—	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
20 to 29 years ..	56	68	59	83	70	81	88	116	169	177	178	219	49	79
30 " 39 " ..	349	361	361	435	419	441	484	528	585	642	692	795	39	92
40 " 49 " ..	770	786	820	836	862	858	876	943	947	1,026	1,069	1,099	61	98
50 " 59 " ..	879	901	929	925	888	877	866	836	806	813	795	815	72	94
60 " 64 " ..	294	291	299	267	244	248	215	354	330	297	295	278	22	21
65 " 69 " ..	177	169	150	123	114	95	139						4	—
70 years and over	45	39	40	25	28	35	30	16	30	34	41	30	—	—
Total Books Exchanged ..	2,570	2,615	2,658	*2,694	2,627	2,637	2,698	2,793	2,867	2,989	3,070	3,236	247	386
Average percentage of possible employment ..	59·2	58·4	55·3	64·4	63·4	62·9	60·5	61·6	56·6	64·6	66·8	63·8		

* 135 men transferred from Group " B."

EMPLOYERS' LABOUR ASSOCIATION,
BRISTOL.
October, 1933.

TABLE II.

PORT OF BRISTOL. SUMMARY OF CASUAL DOCK LABOUR EMPLOYED—1933.

Month.	No. of Working Days.	Average Number of Men Employed per Day.								Summary.		
		General Cargo.	Grain.	Timber.	Scalers.	Bargemen.	Coal.	Checkers.	TOTAL.	Men-Days.	Highest any Day.	Lowest any Day.
Jan.	26	856	204	119	109	54	37	69	1,448	37,654	1,884	996
Feb.	24	810	299	74	138	53	30	51	1,455	34,910	2,146	763
Mar.	27	835	253	73	88	57	28	57	1,391	37,564	2,391	749
April	23	766	251	109	77	48	31	56	1,338	30,775	2,338	842
May	27	715	235	126	67	53	31	48	1,275	34,412	1,900	400
June	25	749	261	179	83	50	40	52	1,414	35,349	2,053	794
July	26	689	284	264	72	56	34	52	1,451	37,727	2,115	941
Aug.	26	833	271	422	87	57	37	73	1,780	46,275	2,374	1,243
Sept.	26	781	279	622	130	62	38	61	1,973	51,312	2,911	1,271
Oct.	26	752	264	407	134	61	31	56	1,705	44,317	2,195	934
Nov.	26	856	297	265	139	75	38	59	1,729	44,963	2,648	964
Dec.	24	917	342	175	131	63	33	72	1,733	41,585	2,287	1,128
	306											
Average per day		796	269	238	104	58	34	59	1,558	—	—	—
Per cent. of total		52	17	15	7	3	2	4	100	—	—	—
Highest any day		1,860	668	870	163	115	82	140	—	—	2,911	—
Lowest any day		149	50	36	44	33	0	8	—	—	—	400
Men-Days ..		243,579	82,424	72,895	31,924	17,627	10,413	17,981	—	476,843	—	—

These returns include Unregistered Men.

Summary of Men Employed under National Dock Agreements.

Casual Men.—Average as above	1,558
Shippers' Checkers (estimated)	18
Boatmen, Riggers, Donkeymen, etc. (estimated) ..	39
Total Casual ..	1,615
Permanent Men	1,200
Total average number of men employed ..	2,815

EMPLOYERS' LABOUR ASSOCIATION, BRISTOL.

TABLE III.

Port of Bristol.

Summary of Casual Dock Labour Employed—1923–33.

Years.	Average Number of Men Employed per Day.								Summary.		
	General Cargo.	Grain.	Timber.	Scalers.	Barge-men.	Coal.	Checkers	Total.	Men-Days.	Highest any day.	Lowest any day.
1923	966	539	292	137	88	72	40	2,134	636,010	4,301	682
1924	1,026	588	346	105	82	79	48	2,274	684,495	3,521	1,167
1925	1,000	473	283	111	78	82	48	2,075	641,040	3,102	860
1926	1,127	405	288	103	81	49	58	2,111	616,431	3,291	844
1927	977	415	246	87	82	77	46	1,930	598,332	3,276	811
1928	874	352	187	76	82	79	43	1,693	520,000	2,679	878
1929	940	286	219	81	76	85	50	1,737	533,563	2,930	533
1930	901	253	189	77	65	78	51	1,614	495,424	2,754	553
1931	910	296	204	102	59	48	50	1,669	512,332	2,872	603
1932	748	270	200	84	56	33	45	1,436	442,150	2,388	571
1933	796	269	238	104	58	34	59	1,558	476,843	2,911	400

These returns include Unregistered men.

Employers' Labour Association of the
Port of Bristol.

TABLE IV.

Analysis of Casual Dock Labour Employed Between 1927–29, Showing the Demand to be Much Heavier in the Latter Half of the Year.

Men Employed.	Number of Days.								
	January to June.			July to December.			Whole Year.		
	1927.	1928.	1929.	1927.	1928.	1929.	1927.	1928.	1929.
Between 500 and 750 ..	—	1	1	—	2	1	—	3	2
,, 751 ,, 1,000 ..	3	9	11	—	3	1	3	12	12
,, 1,001 ,, 1,250 ..	13	23	16	3	15	5	16	38	21
,, 1,251 ,, 1,500 ..	26	30	30	9	26	23	35	56	53
,, 1,501 ,, 1,750 ..	33	25	49	18	29	24	51	54	73
,, 1,751 ,, 2,000 ..	36	26	30	28	37	31	64	63	61
,, 2,001 ,, 2,250 ..	23	26	12	41	21	36	64	47	48
,, 2,251 ,, 2,500 ..	10	11	2	31	14	27	41	25	29
,, 2,501 ,, 2,750 ..	5	2	—	15	7	4	20	9	4
,, 2,751 ,, 3,000 ..	3	—	1	7	—	3	10	—	4
,, 3,001 ,, 3,250 ..	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	—	—
,, 3,251 ,, 3,500 ..	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—
Average number employed per day	1,738	1,630	1,569	2,123	1,757	1,904	1,930	1,693	1,738

N.B.—The figures in Tables II, III and IV include Group " B " and unregistered labour, but do not include the following :—

(A) Checkers employed on behalf of Shippers.
(B) Boatmen, Hobblers, Riggers and Donkeymen.
(C) Men employed by small firms not members of the Association.

Table I shows the extent to which the surplus supply of labour has been reduced by means of registration. The number of registered men has fallen by over 600 in eight years. The reduction in numbers, however, has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the percentage of available employment, a result which is chiefly due to the prevailing depression in trade. This is borne out by Table III, which shows that the average number of men employed per day has fallen from 2,134 in 1923 to 1,558 in 1933. At the same time the increasing use of machinery has led to a displacement of labour, while the increasing average age of the registered men may have tended to a reduction in employment per head, or to put it the other way round, to a larger proportion of unemployment due to incapacity of various kinds. With reference to the last point, it is interesting to observe from Table I that the number of men between the ages of 20 and 50 has fallen steadily, while the number between 50 and 70 has risen. The largest number is within the age group between 41 and 50 years. At present there are more registered dockers over 65 than there are under 35. The question of increasing age is giving rise to a demand from the employers for some relaxation of the conditions of entry to younger men. At present both sides are earnestly engaged in trying to find some method of recruiting younger men and retiring older men without inflicting undue hardship.* This is an important factor which will have to be allowed for in setting up permanent machinery for decasualization. These tables, while showing that progress has been made along certain lines, also suggest that there are still unsolved problems to be tackled. The summary on Table II gives the highest number of men employed in any one day in 1933 as 2,911, the lowest 400 and the average 1,558, whereas Table I shows the total number of registered men at the end of the year to be 2,817. This means that the registered total is almost as high as the peak demand and nearly double the average demand for labour. The figures are subject to some modification by the fact that many of the Group B men are generally employed as Road Transport Workers, Warehousemen and Shipyard Workers, and that less than 50 per cent. of the B men are normally available for dock employment. But since the total number of Group B men is small compared with Group A, the fact which the figures demonstrate is not materially affected, that the total available supply of labour is still in excess of the requirement of the Port.

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* See footnote on page 54.

REORGANIZATION

CHAPTER V

REORGANIZATION

While registration is the first essential step towards decasualization, the next problem, no less important, is to distribute the volume of registered labour in accordance with the constantly changing demand for it. As has been explained in the general survey, the demand for dock labour is subject to a double fluctuation. The general demand for labour as a whole is subject to fluctuations caused by tides, seasonal trade movements, etc., and this aggregate demand is also divided into changing demands for special kinds of labour to meet different classes of work such as general cargo, timber, grain, ore, etc. Since the object of registration is to reduce the supply of labour to the minimum necessary, progress must depend to a certain extent upon the degree of efficiency attained in its organization and use. That is to say, the size of the registered quota of dockers is closely associated with their mobility to move from one job to another in face of a constantly changing demand. If labour is not mobile, whether this be due to the unwillingness of the men to move from one class of work or from one employer to another, or whether it is due to the absence of organized facilities, the number of registered men will be greater than it need be, while the number of unregistered workers never finding jobs will in consequence be relatively large. In this way progress towards decasualization is seriously hindered.

The methods adopted at the various ports to meet such difficulties vary in accordance with local differences, but nearly all the suggestions put forward in the recent Port Labour Enquiry Report are already in operation at Bristol and Avonmouth. The most important factor in the problem is the system of engaging labour. In past days dockers were taken on at recognized "call places," many of which were merely geographical points where the men usually congregated, such as the dock gates, the ship's side, or the corner of a street. If such call places were numerous and there was no intercommunication between them the number of surplus groups failing to secure work were correspondingly greater than they would have been with fewer call stands. The aim of recent experiments, therefore, has been to reduce the number of call places to the lowest possible and to establish communication between them. It has been possible in some ports, of which Avonmouth is one, to set up a Central Stand at which all the labour is engaged. This method is much easier to apply in cases where the docks are completely enclosed and their area is not too extensive to enable the men to get from the stand after engagement to the job in time for starting. The next step is to fix definite "calling-on" times, twice or three times daily, allowing sufficient margin between the time of the call and the starting time of the job. At Avonmouth the call times are 7.45 a.m. for 8.0 and 11.30 a.m. for 12 noon, with provision for special calls any time between 8.0 and 9.30 a.m. on the starting day of a vessel. At the City Docks a Central Stand is not suitable since the docks extend over an unenclosed area for several miles. Here engagements are made at the ship's side or transit shed, but if there is an insufficient supply of registered labour a requisition must be made to the surplus labour stand, and any unregistered labour must be engaged there.

A period of thirty minutes is allowed before any vacancies are filled from the Surplus Stand. This is to enable all registered workers who fail to secure employment to congregate at the Surplus Stand within thirty minutes of call time. Engagements at the Surplus Stand may be made either by the foreman or by an official of the Ministry of Labour, and employers are urged to notify the Surplus Stand of all engagements they propose to make after 8.0 a.m. Employers are obliged to make up shortages from the Surplus Stand and cannot engage unregistered men at the ship's side. These arrangements have met with considerable success and represent a definite advance towards decasualization. In this connection progress has been greatly facilitated by the services of the Port Labour Inspector. Reference has previously been made to the appointment of this officer on the initiative of the Port Transit Executive Committee in June, 1918. In April, 1922, the Port Labour Committee decided to continue this office and to defray the cost equally from both sides. At one time several ports employed such an official, the salary being paid by the State, but Bristol is the only Port at which he has been retained. It would be impossible to enumerate the various duties carried out by the Inspector, but both sides recognize and fully appreciate the services he renders in facilitating the harmonious working of these schemes and increasing the spirit of good-will between the different parties. During calls he is available to direct the men to places where the work is most likely to be available. Nevertheless, difficulties still remain and surpluses of labour are still found at various sections concurrently with shortages in other sections, so that the possibility of erecting a central stand to serve one area of the City Docks is at present under consideration. The remaining obstacles, however, are not entirely due to geographical factors. An important reason is the unwillingness of the men to undertake certain jobs, and this is not simply a matter of better organization. Some refuse time jobs in the hope of securing piecework. Others avoid short-period jobs in anticipation of longer engagements, while nobody wants to start on disagreeable work if there is a prospect of something less exacting. Since this question is bound up with the whole problem of unemployment provision and has some relation to the operation of unemployment schemes, it will be better understood in the light of what follows with reference to that question.

PROVISION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

CHAPTER VI

PROVISION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

THE ultimate object of registration is to render possible some measure of permanent decasualization, and such a measure must include some kind of provision against unemployment. In June, 1919, rules were approved by the Bristol Port Labour Committee for the payment of out-of-work donations, but with the extension of the National Unemployment Insurance Scheme to the Dock Industry in 1920 the need for such disappeared. No one, however, acquainted with the record of the post-war period is satisfied with this arrangement. It is unnecessary to describe the numerous changes which the National Scheme has undergone since it was first launched in 1911, but such changes, many of which have involved attempts to use this machinery for purposes for which it was never intended, are responsible for present difficulties. In recent discussions the special difficulties of fitting casual labour into any national scheme have been emphasized, so that in some quarters specific schemes to deal with this class of labour are being advocated. It is not surprising, therefore, when an attempt is made to apply the much amended national scheme to the peculiar needs of dock labour that anomalies arise and practices are encouraged which evoke criticism. Some of this criticism is based on false evidence, while some of it has been directed to individuals instead of the system which is the real cause of the trouble. It is necessary to try and state the essential facts and set forth the problem impartially.

The important difference between the Port Transport Industry and most other industries in reference to Unemployment Insurance is concisely expressed in the following paragraphs taken from the official Memorandum of Evidence submitted by the Ministry of Labour to the recent Committee of Enquiry.*

> " Except in those industries where organized short time is generally practised or in industries such as the Port Transport Industry which is carried on on a casual basis, only a small percentage of workers are in general employed less than a week at a time. In the Port Transport Industry employment for shorter periods than a week is the common experience of large classes of workers. This under-employment has an effect both on Unemployment Insurance contributions and benefits. So far as contributions are concerned it has the effect that, as contributions are paid weekly in respect of any period of employment from half a day upwards, the amount of contributions paid is sometimes high in proportion to the work done. On the other hand, industries carried on on a casual basis have a much higher rate of unemployment than those providing regular employment, with the result that the latter industries pay a higher rate of contribution than is required by the low rate of unemployment, and the former pay a lower rate than is required by their high rate of unemployment."

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* See Port Labour Enquiry Report, page 49.

The fundamental difference between the Dock Industry and most other industries is the absence of continuity of employment and unemployment in the former compared with the latter. This fact, coupled with the changes made in the National Scheme to meet the difficulties arising when it is applied to casual labour, are the real cause of existing anomalies. The principal change made in this connection was the introduction of the " continuity rule," which renders it unnecessary for any worker to be unemployed for three consecutive days in order to qualify for unemployment benefit. It is only necessary to show that the claimant has been unemployed three days within six. As a result of this a considerable number of dockers are able to earn good wages and still qualify for benefit. The following returns are taken from the Port Labour Enquiry Report, Appendix IV :—

PORT LABOUR ENQUIRY

Information and statistics received regarding the receipt of Unemployment Benefit by better-paid casual workers (see paragraph 87 of the Report).

The large majority of witnesses from the various ports in the country have stated, in giving evidence, that a certain proportion of port transport workers, obtaining comparatively large earnings during casual employment, legally claim Unemployment Benefit. Witnesses have produced particulars of individual cases, either as specially selected examples, or as samples regarded as representative of the whole. These cases show either that the men drew wages as well as benefit in the same week, or that over a period the total income was derived from both, though not necessarily in the same weeks. Each port which produced such statistics did so largely on its own initiative, and in the form it considered most suitable. The information in possession of the Inquiry, therefore, cannot be collated to give a representative picture of practice in the industry as a whole. It is apparent that the experience in the various ports differs materially in this matter, as they are governed to some extent by the particular wage system and method of work in operation. The following information is based upon data which, with the exception of Liverpool and London, have been agreed by the employers' and workpeople's representatives in each port.

Bristol.

Detailed particulars and summary covering 146 Port workers for the period from 4th November, 1929, to 1st March, 1930. These cases are stated to be representative of a larger number.

The following weekly averages are quoted for all the cases given :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	3	16	10
Unemployment Benefit	0	6	5
Total income ..	4	3	3

The summary also shows the total wage and benefit payments and also Unemployment Insurance contributions.

Cardiff (Dockers).

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of thirty-five weeks ended 31st August, 1930, by 129 Port workers. The cases were selected as a 10 per cent. sample of the whole of the registered workers (casual).

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	2	4	9
Unemployment benefit	0	12	8
Total income ..	£2	17	5

Cardiff (*Coal Trimmers*).

In view of the Wage Pooling Scheme, it may be said that all coal trimmers on the average obtain the same amount of wages.

Particulars produced in respect of four weeks ended 3rd October, 1930, for the 1,374 workers who shared in the wages, produce the following averages :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	4	9	10
Unemployment benefit	0	5	6
Total Income ..	£4	15	4

Information in respect of previous and subsequent weeks showed that the above is fairly representative experience in connection with this scheme.

The average weekly wage for the year 1929 was £4 19s. 2d.

Garston.

Particulars of the amounts of wages and benefit received during varying periods of eight consecutive weeks by twenty-six Port workers whose cases were selected for test at random.

Owing to the differences in the periods taken in each case, an average for the whole of the cases cannot be strictly accurate.

As a rough indication of the general result, however, the weekly averages may be quoted as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	4	13	3
Unemployment benefit	0	5	0
Total income ..	£4	18	3

Liverpool.

Information in respect of this port was contained in the Report of an Enquiry instituted by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool into Casual Labour in the Merseyside Area.

This Report contains tables which give the results of a one in twenty-five sample. A copy of one table is attached (Schedule I).

Schedule I.

*Table XXIV.** — One in twenty-five sample. Amount of wages received by selected tally-holders at Liverpool during quarter ended 28th March, 1930, related to amount of Unemployment Insurance Benefit received.

Amount of Wages received in Quarter ended 28th Mar., 1930.		Amount of Unemployment Insurance Benefit payable during Quarter ended 26th March, 1930.						
Amount earned.	Total.	Nil.	Up to £3	Over £3 up to £6	£6—£9	£9—£12	£12—£15	Over £15
Nil	105	70	14	4	11	—	4	2
Up to £12 ..	164	24	15	20	34	33	26	12
Over £12—£24	173	27	9	35	51	34	15	2
Over £24—£36	172	31	21	56	43	16	5	—
Over £36—£48	138	73	27	30	6	—	2	—
Over £48 ..	74	63	1	9	1	—	—	—
Total	826	288	87	154	146	83	52	16

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* Report of Enquiry into Casual Labour in the Merseyside Area, page 92

London.

Particulars were furnished of a number of cases selected to show examples of claims for benefit known to have been made by men drawing high wages. These cases must be taken to be isolated in view of the method of selection. Having regard to the size of this port it is not considered practicable to obtain more representative details.

Manchester.

Two statements were submitted giving individual examples covering periods of four weeks in 1930, in which workers had drawn during the same weeks :—

(*a*) Wages and Unemployment Benefit, and

(*b*) Wages, Compensation and Unemployment Benefit.

The statements gave sixteen and seventeen cases respectively, but it is claimed that they are representative of a larger number, and that the period taken was normal.

Middlesbrough (*Tees Wharves*).

Particulars of seven cases are given which were selected at random and covering varying periods. The highest case showed the following weekly averages :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	3	13	8
Unemployment benefit	0	15	9
Total income ..	£4	9	5

The lowest case showed :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	1	1	7
Unemployment benefit	0	11	8
Total income ..	£1	13	3

It was also stated at this port that the average weekly wages paid during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1930, for all casual port workers registered at the Tees Wharves was as follows :—

	Men.	£ s. d.
Above 40 per cent. of possible engagements	588	3 19 1
40 per cent. and less of possible engagements	157	1 15 8
Average for	745	£3 9 10

The above figures do not include any earnings which the men may have obtained at Middlesbrough Dock. Separate figures for Unemployment Benefit are not available, but it may be stated that the total benefit paid in respect of all registered dock workers at Middlesbrough (1,833) during the year 1929 was £9,827 ; the average weekly payments being 253 in number and the average payment 15s.

Newport (*Mon.*).

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of 27 weeks by 49 port workers. The cases were selected as a 5 per cent. sample of the whole of the registered workers (casual).

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are :—

	£ s. d.
Wages	2 13 3
Unemployment benefit	0 10 9
Total income ..	£3 4 0

Port Talbot.

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of 26 weeks by 11 port workers selected at random.

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	5	9	1
Unemployment benefit	0	7	0
Total income ..	£5	16	1

Swansea.

Particulars of the total wages and benefit received during a period of 8 weeks by 58 port workers. The cases were selected as a 5 per cent. sample of the whole of the registered dockers (casual).

The weekly averages for the cases over the period taken are :—

	£	s.	d.
Wages	2	18	5
Unemployment benefit	0	6	11
Total income ..	£3	5	4

The reason for such anomalies is not far to seek. The docker is very frequently only employed for half a day or one day at a time. If in the course of a week his total payments amount to three whole days he will qualify for benefit for the remaining three days. But should he take on another half day's work for which he might earn 6s., he runs the risk of forfeiting the whole of his benefit. In this way the desire to keep in benefit by maintaining his continuity directly conflicts with his desire to undertake more work. The position is accentuated by the fact that the week within which there must be three unemployed days is not a calendar week, so that the worker can work backwards and forwards for the purpose of proving unemployment. While benefit cannot be counted twice for the same day, the same day can be counted more than once in making an unemployment claim. The following table illustrates the position :—

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFIT.

APPLICATION OF "CONTINUITY RULE" TO CASUAL DOCKERS.

"X" denotes day of proved unemployment.

"O" denotes day of employment.

Week.	Wednesday.	Thursday	Friday.	Saturday.	Monday.	Tuesday.	U.I. Benefit.		Notes.
							Days paid.	Days signed	
1st	O	X	X	X	O	O	3	3	
2nd	O	X	O	X	O	X	3	3	
3rd	X	O	O	O	X	X	3	3	
4th	O	O	O	X	O	O	1	1	
5th	O	O	O	X	X	O	–	2	
6th	O	X	X	O	O	X	5	3	Friday used to obtain continuity in three periods.
7th	X	O	O	O	O	X	1	2	Tuesday non-effective.
8th	X	O	O	O	O	X	–	2	Wednesday non-effective.
9th	O	O	X	X	O	O	3	2	
10th	X	X	O	O	O	X	3	3	
11th	O	O	X	X	X	X	4	4	
12th	X	X	X	O	X	X	5	5	
13th	O	O	O	O	X	O	–	1	Monday non-effective.
14th	O	O	O	O	X	X	–	2	
15th	O	O	X	X	O	O	4	2	
16th	O	O	X	O	O	X	–	2	
17th	X	O	O	O	O	O	3	1	
18th	X	O	X	O	O	X	3	3	
19th	O	X	O	O	O	X	1	2	
20th	O	X	X	X	O	O	4	3	
21st	O	O	O	X	X	O	–	2	Man works four days each week and draws benefit for the other two days.
22nd	O	O	X	X	O	O	4	2	
23rd	O	X	O	X	O	O	1	2	
24th	O	X	X	O	O	O	3	2	
25th	O	O	O	O	X	X	–	2	
26th	X	X	O	O	O	O	4	2	
27th	O	O	X	X	O	O	–	2	Man works four days each week but fails to qualify for benefit, every signature being non-effective.
28th	O	O	X	X	O	O	–	2	
29th	O	O	O	O	X	X	–	2	
30th	O	O	O	O	X	X	–	2	

Other anomalies might be quoted from the Report of the Enquiry, but they would only serve to emphasize the unsuitability of the existing scheme when applied to the Dock Industry. It is both futile and unjust to blame individuals and make accusations of abuse. Both sides are fully alive to the unsatisfactory nature of the present situation and the Union officials have admitted the need for reform. The establishment of a special scheme is no simple undertaking, but it may be necessary if decasualization is to become an accomplished fact. The present policy of dealing with unemployment provision by means of the National Scheme has increased the task of those who by registration are trying to reduce the floating surplus of labour attached to the docks. On the one hand labour is attracted to the docks as an easy method of qualifying for unemployment benefit, while on the other the men with poor employment records oppose schemes of registration by means of which they would be eliminated. Effective registration aims at both stopping the inflow of labour and getting rid of the men who pick up an odd job at the docks merely to qualify for benefit. The provision at present offered to the latter by the National Scheme tends to obstruct action in both directions.

Decasualization involves setting up machinery by which it is possible to control the supply of labour so that the volume of work and wages will be distributed in such a manner as to afford a reasonable amount of work to all registered workers. Such machinery must also provide financial assistance during periods of enforced idleness, and the problem is either to set up a separate scheme or adapt the National Scheme to the industry, so that it will not obstruct the progress of decasualization. In the light of what has been stated above with reference to the difference between the Port Transport Industry and most other industries, there seems little doubt that a separate scheme would be the more satisfactory solution. It would be idle, nevertheless, to minimize the difficulties of setting up such a scheme, difficulties of demarcation and cost, and of the objections that might be raised by both sides to being asked to make special provision which might include allowances different from those available under the present scheme. The following suggestions are not put forward with any claim to finality, but simply as a contribution to the discussion of a difficult problem in the hope that they may help towards a solution.

The first difficulty arises from the absence of reliable data upon which to estimate the financial resources at present available. It is useless to discuss minimum standards and scales of benefit without some idea of what the industry can pay. And only with such information to hand is it possible to discuss the claim of the Industry upon the State for financial assistance. Some light is thrown upon this problem by the results of an enquiry which was carried out at Bristol. In the spring of 1930 returns were compiled and submitted to the Port Labour Enquiry, which at that time was conducting its investigations. The work was carried out by the Employers' Labour Association. The period selected was November 4th, 1929, to March 1st, 1930, which includes two busy months and two slack months. The average number of men employed per day was 1,776, which compares with the figure of 1,738 for 1929. The employment in the various grades was typical for the whole year except in the case of Coal Porters, which was 16 per cent. below the yearly average. The period covered was exactly 100 days (December 25th and 26th being holidays), and thus rendered the conversion of the record of employment from days to percentage unnecessary.

Six principal employers were asked to submit the names of 200 casual workers who had been employed intermittently at piece-work rates. A preliminary inspection of the registration books resulted in the reduction of the number to 175, the following cases being struck out: (*a*) men with more than 80 per cent. employment, (*b*) men not available throughout the period owing to sickness or accident, (*c*) men over sixty-five years of age.

Registration books were then examined in detail and employers were notified of the dates on which men had been employed and were asked to fill in the wages paid each day. On completion the employers' returns were collated and associated with the returns showing unemployment insurance benefit which had been supplied by the secretary of the Port Labour Committee. Cases which disclosed apparent discrepancies were excluded, so that the final returns covered 146 men.

The following points were emphasized by the Committee :—

(*a*) The cases are submitted as being typical of a much larger number.

(*b*) The wages include overtime, but exclude Sunday work.

(*c*) The percentage of employment obtained was less than the average for the Port.

(*d*) The number of non-effective days (days signed at the Exchange for which benefit was not paid) amounted to less than 8 per cent. of the total days signed.

The final analysis shows that the 146 men for whom returns were submitted earned an average weekly wage over the period of £3 16s. 10d. supplemented by an average weekly unemployment benefit payment of 6s. 5d., making the total weekly income of £4 3s. 3d.

A summary of the figures is given on pages 88 and 89.

Such figures provide some foundation for the assumption that at present the total payments made in wages and unemployment benefit represent a sum sufficient to provide a living wage to all registered men. But an examination of the detailed figures shows that both wages and benefit are unequally shared. One section of the men receive a disproportionate share of the better paid work, and consequently receive relatively high wages for little more than half a week's work, while the other section work longer for less wages. This inequality is aggravated by the fact that high-paid men may obtain as much unemployment benefit as lower-paid workers. As at present administered the Unemployment Insurance Scheme does not offset differences in earnings but frequently intensifies these differences. The problem, therefore, is to bring about a better distribution of work so as to ensure a more equitable distribution of wages, and to use the funds at present available for unemployment benefit to provide a guaranteed minimum allowance regardless of the period employed. The questions raised by the discussion of such a scheme are of fundamental importance. The total wages bill, for example, depends upon the existing rates and methods of payment as well as the efficiency and mobility of the available supply of labour. Unemployment Provision raises the issue as to whether the industry should have a special scheme of its own, and if so whether the State should be liable to contribute. This is not the place to discuss such matters in detail, but some reference is necessary in general outline.

Wage Rates.—It is frequently asserted that the rates of wages paid to the docker are high relatively to those paid in comparable trades, and that the decision of the Shaw Court was based on the assumption that four to four and a half days was the maximum amount of work obtainable in any one week, while no provision was made for unemployment. There is doubtless truth in such a view, but quite apart from differences of opinion as to prevailing rates of payment, all will agree that the rate has an important relation to the volume of work available and any provision which might be possible against periods of idleness. The current rates of wages is only one factor amongst others in determining the workers' standard of living, and in an industry like that of the dockers it is less important than the assurance of a reasonable amount of employment with some provision when unemployed. In the absence of any effective control, a rise in the standard rate by attracting more surplus labour to the docks diminishes the share available to the men who are competing for work. It is a relevant criticism that since the Shaw Court award of higher rates was

TABLE

SUMMARY OF WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

4th November, 1929,

Group.	No. of Cases.	Average Record of Employment.			
		Worked.	Benefit paid.	Signed but not paid.	Unaccounted.
		per cent.	per cent.	per cent.	per cent.
A	44	57·1	30·2	1·4	11·3
B	20	65·1	26·8	2·1	6·0
C	21	69·0	22·3	3·1	5·6
D	37	70·1	22·5	2·3	5·1
E	24	64·6	27·1	2·3	6·0
Totals.. ..	146				
Weighted Averages		64·5	26·1	2·1	7·3

Group.	Group Averages.			
	Age.	No. of Employers.	Rate of U.I. Benefit.	Wages per day worked.
	Years.	Per man.	Per day. s. d.	s. d.
A	47	2·2	3 11	25 11
B	50	3·1	3 10½	19 11
C	44	8·4	3 7	16 10
D	44	2·6	4 1	17 7
E	45	2·8	4 1	19 1
Weighted Averages	46	3·1	4 0	20 3

A, B, C, D and E refer to separate groups analysed representing

V.

Benefit paid to Casual Dock Workers.

to 1st *March*, 1930.

Total Payments.			Average Weekly Payments.		
Wages.	U.I. Benefit.	Total.	Wages.	U.I. Benefit.	Total.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.
3,252 12 10	286 19 8	3,539 12 6	4 7 0	7 8	4 14 8
1,295 17 2	102 10 4	1,398 7 6	3 16 3	6 0	4 2 3
1,219 16 7	103 16 8	1,323 13 3	3 8 4	5 10	3 14 2
2,285 0 4	174 19 4	2,459 19 8	3 12 8	5 7	3 18 3
1,484 14 7	132 0 10	1,616 15 5	3 12 9	6 6	3 19 3
£9,538 1 6	£800 6 10	£10,338 8 4			
			£3 16 10	6 5	£4 3 3

Unemployment Contributions Paid.				
No. of Stamps.	Employers 8d.	Worker 7d.	State 7½d.	Total at 1/10½d. per week.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
708	23 12 0	20 13 0	22 2 6	66 7 6
329	10 19 4	9 11 11	10 5 7½	30 16 10½
353	11 15 4	10 5 11	11 0 7½	33 1 10½
622	20 14 8	18 2 10	19 8 9	58 6 3
390	13 0 0	11 7 6	12 3 9	36 11 3
2,402	£80 1 4	£70 1 2	£75 1 3	£225 3 9

different kinds of work of which this is the summary.

granted too much has been heard of the rise in rates and too little progress made towards decasualization. But in cases where registration has led to a substantial reduction in the supply of labour without at the same time equalizing the distribution of available work, many workers have been able to obtain a disproportionate share of both work and wages at the expense of the remainder. In other words, they have secured the double advantage of high rates and more constant employment and in many instances unemployment benefit in addition. Such classes are obtaining relatively high wages. The returns quoted above show that a considerable number of men are able to make a good weekly income in three to three and a half days and so feel themselves more or less independent of the necessity to work a full week if they do not choose to do so. In discussing some of the obstacles to mobility within the docks between different kinds of jobs it was pointed out that some men prefer to wait for piece-work rather than start on time, others avoid short time jobs in the hope of securing work of longer duration later. Some naturally shy clear of disagreeable jobs if there is any prospect of more congenial ones. Such tendencies are greatly reinforced if the worker can be reasonably certain of earning good wages for three days within six. It is not that the docker is work-shy; it is simply that the improvement in his financial position enables him to be more independent in sticking out for the kind of work he prefers. Before the days of registration it was possible in certain piece-work jobs to earn good wages so long as work was available, but the risks of being unemployed were much greater because of the much larger supply of workers competing for jobs, and there was no unemployment relief available during idle periods. Such conditions acted as a strong incentive to the worker to seek all the work he could obtain. It would appear, therefore, that partial decasualization due to a reduction in the supply of labour has by improving the dockers' standard of living created new problems of immobility and unequal distribution of work and wages.

Any discussion of wage rates must, therefore, be related to these new difficulties. Forcing down wage rates is always a difficult and dangerous policy and should only be attempted as a last resort. But if such a choice becomes inevitable there is no reason why with better organization in the distribution of work the dockers' general standard of living need fall. Some highly-paid men would have to work longer to maintain the same income, while others by securing more work at a lower rate than they had before would find their incomes increased. As the men came to view the problem in terms of money incomes rather than in terms of wage rates, and to realize that incomes depended upon them obtaining a reasonable amount of employment, the whole discussion of wage questions would become less inflammable and the advantages of decasualization would become more apparent. But progress in this direction implies some change in the present system of providing benefit through the machinery of National Unemployment Insurance. The simplest solution would be to exclude Port Transport Labour from the National Scheme and substitute a special scheme suitable to the industry. As already stated, such a proposal involves serious difficulties, but they are not necessarily greater than those being created by the present system and they have been considered on several occasions. A scheme was discussed in 1916 which provided a guaranteed weekly wage of 30s. to all registered dock workers. The funds were to be raised by imposing entrance and annual fees upon the employers and if necessary a levy on wages. The scheme is referred to with approval by Sir William Beveridge in his new edition of *Unemployment.** Under such a scheme charges would depend upon the number of men required. The rate would vary according to the cost of maintenance, so that there would be a strong inducement to keep the numbers down to the lowest possible. The industry would pay, not in proportion to the employment given, but in proportion to the number of men attached to it. One criticism of this proposal is that workers with prospects of only one or two days' work might be encouraged to avoid seeking work since the maintenance provision would be equal to or more than they could hope to earn. This objection could be overcome if the worker were paid only 75 per cent. of the standard weekly allowance in cases of total unemployment, and in cases of employed men 75 per cent. of the difference between what they earn and the standard. Suppose the standard weekly allowance was fixed at 40s. The worker totally unemployed would receive 75 per cent. of this, namely 30s. If one day's work was obtained at 20s. the worker would then receive 75 per cent. of the difference between this amount and the standard in addition to the sum earned, that is, three-quarters of 20s. + 20s. = 15s. + 20s. = 35s. The following Table illustrates the method :—

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* *Unemployment — A Problem of Industry*, by Sir William Beveridge (1930 edition), page 318.

Weekly Standard.	Period Worked.	Earnings.	Total payments if paid 75 per cent. of the differences between earnings and standard in addition to amount earned.
s. d.		s. d.	s. d.
40 0	Nil.	—	30 0
40 0	½ day.	10 0	32 6
40 0	1 day.	20 0	35 0
40 0	1½ day.	30 0	37 6
40 0	2 day.	40 0	40 0

Anomalies would still remain if each week were treated separately. Some men who might earn £7 or £8 for two or three weeks would have a claim on the fund in subsequent weeks if no work was available. It might be necessary, therefore, to work out some system of averaging earnings over a longer period to ensure fair treatment all round. This whole problem, however, would be simplified by setting up a system of weekly payments, which is considered later. Such machinery is an essential precedent to the introduction of any kind of provision, since no one at present has more than a hazy idea of the average earnings for all dockers or the possible cost of any system of maintenance.

Weekly Payments.—Before leaving the question of provision some reference is necessary to the important question of weekly payments. To arrive at an estimate of the cost of any scheme some record of earnings is essential. But much stronger reasons exist in favour of weekly payments. The absence of regular payments is the most fertile source of the evils of casual labour. At present thousands of dockers cannot guess what these weekly incomes are likely to be and have no regular time at which they are paid.* This uncertainty has a most demoralizing influence upon the worker, is destructive of all habits of saving, and brings disaster to the household. Precarious and fluctuating family wages put a heavy strain upon the conscientious mother of a family, and it is not to be wondered at that many give way under it and simply let matters drift. A record of weekly earnings can be obtained by two methods, by an employment book carried by each worker which shows the days upon which the holder is employed with the amount earned on each job, or by weekly pay sheets prepared in a Clearing House, the system now operating in Liverpool.

At Bristol there are practical and geographical difficulties in the way of setting up a Clearing House, but there are none which could not be overcome by the joint effort and support of the employers and the Trade Union officials. The real opposition to such a scheme comes from the men themselves. This question was fully discussed by the Bristol Port

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* This was strikingly illustrated on one occasion when the causes of a wages dispute were discussed with a docker who had a first-rate record of service. In justification of his criticism of the employer's demand for a reduction he asserted that the average earnings of all dockers throughout the year never exceeded 30s. weekly, and contended that his own wage record during the year would show even less. An examination of his record showed that during the first six months he actually averaged in wages 50s. weekly apart from unemployment benefit. It was quite impossible to convince him that this was a correct statement because the money had been paid out at the end of each job and he had lost all idea of his actual earnings. Some weeks showed little or nothing, while others showed big wages.

Labour Committee as far back as December, 1919. A sub-committee reported in favour of the principle of weekly wages with provision for two subs. per week, but considered that the time was not yet ripe to propose a scheme as the operatives at the moment were not in agreement with the principle. It was agreed that the Dockers' Union should prepare a circular for distribution to its branches with the object of familiarizing members with the object of the scheme. After a discussion on this report the officials of the Union stated that they were entirely in agreement with the principle but had utterly failed to persuade their members to give the matter a trial.

Consideration was then postponed for the time being. In September, 1930, the Employers' Association expressed itself in favour of weekly wages through a Clearing House. Various reasons are put forward to explain the opposition of the men, such as fear of assessment to Income Tax and reluctance of having to record wages which would emphasize disparities and inequalities. The men also object to any disclosure of wages to their wives. But the underlying objection to such changes is symptomatic of the demoralizing influence of casual employment. Weekly payments involving records are rightly suspected as part of a general policy of complete decasualization, and such a policy is contrary to all past habits and traditions of the docker. The casual system has produced the casual habit, and no matter how evil its effects, it is difficult to eradicate. The opposition of the worker is the highest proof of the need for reform. The problem is of the same type as that of reforming the street urchin by making him subject to the discipline of regular work. While ultimately this will mean for him a much better living, he nevertheless tries to escape into the greater freedom of the streets in the early stages of reform. There is no single factor that would make for an improvement in the docker's standard of living of so great importance as the institution of regular weekly payments, especially if this was accompanied by changes in the conditions of his employment that would eliminate violent fluctuations in his earnings.

Progress in this direction has been made recently as the result of a decision by the Treasury in response to representations made by the Standing Advisory Committee on Registration and Decasualization. Funds are to be provided for the erection of buildings at Avonmouth and Grimsby to accommodate foremen and men when engagements are being made, and to be used as a Port Workers' Office for the purpose of taking proof of unemployment following calls. As regards Avonmouth, both sides have approved of weekly payments, and with the prospect of suitable arrangements the workers' representatives have undertaken to try and persuade the men themselves to co-operate provided the Ministry of Labour will erect pay-desks for this purpose in the new buildings.

For the foregoing reasons any sound scheme for provision against unemployment must fit in with the larger policy of decasualization dealing with such questions as registration, control and organization of labour supply so as to ensure some equality of distribution of work and wages and the regular payment of wages. As an indication of what can be done a description is given in the Appendix* of the scheme at present in operation in the Port of Rotterdam and of a scheme which until recently applied to the Port of Hamburg. Changes are taking place there arising out of the present upheaval in Germany, but the experiments made in both these centres will repay careful study by all those interested in finding a solution to this problem. As stated, both these ports are favourably situated for carrying out measures of decasualization, but formidable obstacles have been overcome by the co-ordinated efforts of all the parties interested. In the case of Rotterdam, practically all the principles laid down by the Shaw Court have been successfully put into practice. So far as Bristol is concerned, registration is firmly established and entry to the docks industry is effectively controlled. The mobility of the labour supply is steadily improving, thus reducing the risks of insecurity to which the casual worker is exposed. The consequence has been a steady improvement in the personnel of the registered workers and the recruiting of new workers by a process of selection. The two big problems still to be dealt with in this country are the establishment of regular weekly payments and the provision of unemployment benefit either by a further modification of the National Scheme to suit the special requirements of the industry, if that is possible, or by substituting the present arrangements by a special scheme. As has been shown, the chief opposition to weekly payments comes from the workers themselves, but there are good grounds for hoping that the influence of the improvements already made will tend to weaken this opposition as a new generation of dockers grows up. The problem of establishing some guarantee against unemployment involves questions affecting the distribution of work and methods of payment, matters upon which human nature is very sensitive. But the desire to grant fair treatment is equally strong, so that a better understanding of the problem and a clearer conception of the object in view will go far to generate that atmosphere of co-operation which makes for progress. Much of the work done by the docker is highly skilled, and the men who enter the industry for a living are entitled to expect the same recognition as the labour engaged in any other industry. But this standard will only be reached by reducing the risks inherent in the industry through the guarantee of wages and unemployment provision worthy of the men by whose labour it is carried on. Such evidence as is available favours the belief that the financial resources already exist to render this possible, provided goodwill and the necessary organizing ability are applied in its administration. The operation of the present unemployment scheme is unnecessarily costly. Confronted with existing anomalies, each party is obliged to defend its own interests, involving enquiries and courts of referees to adjudicate upon conflicting claims. The employers, the workers, and the Ministry are each obliged to make out their case, and frequently outside parties with little knowledge of the industry are called in to make important decisions. Such criticism applies to the whole system, but it is particularly relevant in reference to industries in which the risks of unemployment are exceptionally high. These difficulties would be best overcome by the establishment of a special scheme which had the approval and support of the particular industry concerned, and for this reason the Dock Industry would be well advised to explore carefully the possibility of such an undertaking. An incalculable saving of time and money might be realized, which at present is wasted in the discussion of wages and the distribution of work, if the outlook of both employers and men was dominated by a keener sense of the service they render and a desire to maintain the prestige of their craft. Much is heard of the loss involved by lock-outs and strikes, but a much greater loss is incurred continuously during the working period when workmen are sullen and masters are severe. The absence of strikes, if due to the existence of harmonious relations, represents a financial gain far in excess of the estimated cost of stoppages. Contented workers and sympathetic employers will always manage to compose their differences and compete on the most favourable terms with their rivals. Given such conditions, it should be possible to provide every man with at least a living wage, along with provision against periods of enforced idleness during depression, and to arrange that all shall share in the prosperity of good times.

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* Appendix V.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

BRISTOL PORT LABOUR COMMITTEE.

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 1ST, 1917.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE AT 11.0 A.M.

Present—

D. Ross-Johnson (in the chair).
Alderman W. H. Twiggs.
A. C. Barnard.
T. Cogan.
E. Bevin.
H. Wynne-Jones.
Sir Frank Wills.
Major F. Wilson Fox.
Captain Lucas, R.N.
L. Broad (Secretary).

Minutes of Meeting held 23rd October, which had been circulated, were taken as read.

Arising from Minutes.

Discussion took place regarding letter regarding proposals of procedure for the issue of Port Labour Record of Employment Books received from Mr. Bevin, Dockers' Union, at last meeting. After discussion the following rules of procedure for the issue of Port Labour Records Books were adopted.

1. All books to be issued through the Dockers' Union Office, subject to the reference to the Port Labour Committee in cases of difficulty and subject to the following clauses.

2. All persons employed in transport work of the Port and under the jurisdiction of the Port Labour Committee to be in possession of Port Labour Books.

3. Chief foremen to be supplied with books from the Union on application either by themselves or by their employers.

4. Members of Craft Unions to be supplied either through their accredited representatives or on application by their employers or individually on showing proof that they are engaged on the Docks and that their occupation is covered by the Port Labour Committee.

5. Seamen who are ashore temporarily to be supplied with a book marked "temporary." On transferring to shore work permanently they should be transferred to the Dockers' Union and supplied with a permanent book.

6. All persons not in any of the above categories to apply individually at the most convenient Dockers' Union Office.

N.B.—With reference to Clause 3, it was understood that in the case of the Docks Committee Employees' "Chief Foremen" include "Deputy Foremen" of the Sections, *i.e.* all men responsible for the engagement of labour.

N.B.—With reference to Clause 5, this is subject to confirmation in writing by the Secretary of the Seamen's Union.

With regard to the members of the Docks Committee Staff who are members of the Workers' Union, it was arranged in order to avoid disputes during the duration of war that a list of these men should be prepared by the Docks Committee Officers, and agree with the Dockers' Union.

For these men only books will be obtained by the employer from the Dockers' Union, Bristol Office, and in future exchanged in the same manner. The list so agreed is not to be added to.

It was decided that a small Sub-Committee consisting of Mr. Ross-Johnson, Mr. Bevin and Mr. Broad should draft a set of rules on the above lines, and that a copy of same should be handed to the Employers' Labour Association, who should be asked to circulate copies of the rules to all Employers of the Port.

Clerical Staff.

Mr. Wynne-Jones drew attention to the urgent desirability that the Port Labour Committee should be empowered to deal with clerks employed in the Shipping Offices and in the Port, and also stated that a meeting of the Port and Transit Committee was being held in London to-day, and suggested that the Committee should pass a resolution and forward same in time to reach the Committee to-day.

Alderman W. H. Twiggs suggested that we re-affirm decision of the Committee, held 3rd May, 1917, and that the letter drawing attention to this resolution be forwarded to the Board of Trade, Port and Transit Committee and the Ministry of Shipping.

Mr. Bevin stated that he was attending the Meeting of the Port and Transit Committee and would state the views of the Port Labour Committee on this subject.

APPENDIX II

BRISTOL PORT LABOUR COMMITTEE.

Scheme for Registration of Transport Workers, 1919.

1. *Registration.*

There shall be a complete Registration Scheme for all general labour in or about the Docks, divided into: (*a*) All Dock Labour; (*b*) All Carters, Warehousemen and permanent Loaders. The term "general labour" does not include members of Engineering and other Craft Trades and the permanent administrative Staffs of employers.

2. *Men to be Registered.*

All men at present holding Record Books to be registered. No other men to be registered except those men who previously were employed on the Dock and are now being demobilized from H.M. Forces.

3. *Date Operative.*

The Scheme shall come into operation on March 31st, 1919, and all men under the Scheme to be members of the Dockers' Union.

4. *Registration by Tally.*

Registration to be by means of metal tally. Tallies to be of two varieties, viz. :—

(*a*) All Dock Labour (round and square marked " D ").

(*b*) All Carters, Warehousemen and permanent Loaders (Oval and Triangular, marked " C ").

Tallies are not interchangeable. Carters' tallies will not be accepted for employment as Dock Labourers or vice versa except when there is a shortage of labour in one section and a surplus of labour in the other, and only when this shortage is certified by the Labour Adviser. The Tally number issued to a man shall be retained by him during the whole of his service, and the same number shall be entered on his Union Card. Tallies to be exchanged quarterly at the Dockers' Union Offices.

Each quarter Tallies will be of distinct shape, to ensure that they are exchanged quarterly.

The change of Record Books for Tallies will be made during the last week of the present quarter.

During this period the expiring Record Book or new Tally will be valid, and during the last week of each subsequent quarter the expiring Tally and the new Tally will be similarly valid.

All Tallies must be in possession of men by the 31st March.

5. *No Engagement without Tally.*

No man shall be engaged who is not in possession of the official Tally.

6. *Retention of Tallies.*

The Tally must be collected by the Employer or his representative upon a man's engagement, and retained until the termination.

7. *Men following on Employment.*

A man who is engaged for loading or discharging a ship is entitled and is required to retain his employment until the completion of the work for which he is engaged. If a man is absent fifteen minutes after calling-off time another man may be employed for the day, and the first man shall not be entitled to his Tally until he has given a satisfactory explanation to his employer and the Labour Representative, or until the job is finished.

8. *Interruption of Engagement.*

Interruption of the engagement on account of stress of weather or other causes not under the control of the employer or worker, shall be dealt with in accordance with the respective agreements with the Union.

9. *Breach of Regulations.*

Any breach of the regulations regarding the employment of men without Tallies, or the discontinuance of work before the completion of an engagement on the part of either employer or worker, shall be reported to the Port Labour Committee.

10. *Transferring Tallies.*

Any man either transferring a Tally or fraudulently obtaining work by the use of another man's Tally shall be reported to the Port Labour Committee.

11. *Losing Tallies.*

Men or employers losing Tallies will be required to pay the cost of same.

12. *Revision of Labour Supply.*

On completion of demobilization the number of men on the Docks shall be reviewed, and in case it is necessary to reduce the number of men holding Tallies, the names of men who took up work on the Dock after the 4th August, 1914, shall be reviewed by the Port Labour Committee.

13. *Additional Men admitted only by Consent of Committee.*

In case additional men are required at any time in the Port, no man shall be admitted without the consent of the Port Labour Committee, and in the event of more men being required applications would be considered by the Port Labour Committee or Sub-Committee thereof, provision to be made that such Committee meets at regular intervals.

APPENDIX III

BRISTOL PORT LABOUR COMMITTEE.

D. Ross-Johnson, Esq., Chairman.

Employers' Panel.	*Workpeople's Panel.*
Mr. H. Wynne-Jones.	Mr. A. C. Barnard.
Mr. G. F. Cullen.	Mr. T. G. Cogan.
Mr. S. C. Parkin.	Mr. A. E. Dickenson.
	Mr. A. Taylor.

P. Hanley, Secretary.
F. W. Ellis, Assistant Secretary.
H. D. Tomkins, Port Labour Inspector.

Rules of Procedure in connection with the issue and exchange of Tallies, as agreed by the Port Labour Committee at their Meeting on Thursday, April 28th, 1921.

1. On all future occasions Port Labour Tallies shall be exchanged jointly by Officials of the Dockers' Union and the Secretariat of the Port Labour Committee; Union Cards to be produced on exchange of Tallies.

2. That for a period of four clear days men working at Avonmouth shall be given the opportunity of exchanging their tallies at the Shelter, Avonmouth, or other suitable premises to be arranged. Whilst the tallies are being exchanged at Avonmouth no tallies will be exchanged at either Bristol or Portishead.

After four clear days have been allowed for the men working at Avonmouth, tallies will be exchanged at the Dockers' Union Office, Bristol, between the hours of 8.0 a.m. and 5.0 p.m., for a period of six clear days, except that on Saturdays the exchange will cease at 1.0 p.m. Special arrangements to be made, of which due notice by means of a poster will be given to the men affected, in order that the men chiefly using Portishead Dock and resident in that locality shall be able to exchange their tallies on a given day at Portishead.

3. That a standing "Tally Sub-Committee" be appointed forthwith, and that on and after the date of the first exchange of tallies following the appointment of the Special Sub-Committee, all applications for tallies shall be referred to the Port Labour Committee, and all enquiries and queries addressed to the Employment Exchange or Dockers' Union at either Bristol or Avonmouth shall be referred to the Secretary of the Committee, in order that the Register may be kept up to date. Any information concerning change of address of tally-holders to be notified as early as possible.

4. All questions arising with regard to lost or mislaid tallies to be dealt with by the Secretary, who shall only issue a new tally after thorough investigation. To enable the *bona fide* tally-holder to obtain work whilst the investigations are being carried out, a "temporary permit to work" on a form issued by the Port Labour Committee, and available for six clear working days, will be issued to the Dock Worker at the Union Office, indicating that he appears to be entitled to the use of a tally.

5. Rule No. 11 of the Registration Scheme of the Bristol Port Labour Committee, saying "men or employers losing tallies will be required to pay the cost of same" will be enforced; the amount recoverable being 1s. for each tally. Any sum recoverable to be credited to the Ministry of Labour.

6. On each exchange of tallies the classification, address, etc., of the tally-holder will be obtained or verified, in order to ascertain the number of Grain Porters, General Cargo Men, etc., working in the Port, and to enable the registers to be kept up to date. Also to obtain during the exchange of tallies the approximate number of men actually working on Dock work during the period of exchange.

7. All permanent men on weekly contracts holding the appropriate card shall exchange same at intervals to be decided later. Permanent men must only be in possession of a certificate, and in no circumstance must hold a tally.

8. After the prescribed period has elapsed during which the exchange of tallies shall take place, all Port Labour Tallies shall be returned to remain in the custody of the Secretariat of the Port Labour Committee.

9. Any person desiring to effect the exchange of a Port Labour Tally after the prescribed period of exchange has elapsed shall make application to the Tally Sub-Committee, who shall satisfy themselves that the applicant is in fact regularly following Dock work. Where the exchange of the tally is delayed, and a valid reason for the delay is forthcoming, such as sickness, etc., a certificate, in the prescribed form, to this effect will be given by a Dockers' Union Official

(who is himself a member of the Port Labour Committee), and this certificate will be the authority of the Committee's Secretariat for exchanging the tally without bringing the case before the Sub-Committee. During the periodical exchange of tallies, every Docker must exchange his tally in person.

10. With each exchange of tallies, each *bona fide* tally-holder will be issued a certificate bearing his name, address, tally number, etc., and this certificate shall remain in the possession of the man during the whole of the period he holds a tally.

11. It is recommended that tallies be exchanged four-monthly. The Register of Tally-Holders will be available for inspection by any member, or accredited representative of any member, of the Port Labour Committee.

APPENDIX IV

BRISTOL PORT LABOUR COMMITTEE.

REGISTRATION SCHEME, 26TH AUGUST, 1925.

1. *Men to be Registered.*

All casual general workers engaged in the handling of cargo both on shore and aboard to be registered.

2. *Exceptions.*

The following classes of workers not to be included in this scheme :—

Permanent employees of all grades.
Carters and Warehousemen.
Licensed Boatmen and Hobblers at Avonmouth, Portishead and River Avon.

3. *Method of Registration.*

Registration to be by means of an Employment Record Book which will show the Holder's name, address, age, registration number and usual occupation.

4. *Membership of Union.*

All men under the scheme to be members of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

5. *Engagement of Labour.*

All labour to be engaged strictly in accordance with :

(*a*) The Agreements between the Employers'

Association and the Transport and General Workers' Union, and

(*b*) The Regulations made by the Port Labour Committee regarding the Surplus Labour Stand.

6. *No Engagement without Registration Book.*

No man to be engaged who is not in possession of a Registration Book except in cases where the Port Labour Inspector certifies a shortage of registered workers, in which case non-registered men may be engaged. Preference to be given to any unemployed men of the grade shown in paragraph 3.

7. *Stamping of Registration Books.*

The books to be stamped with an official stamp by the employer in respect of each day's employment. On occasions when overtime is worked after midnight, the book should be stamped in respect of both days.

8. *Retention of Registration Books.*

The book must be collected by the employer or his representative upon the man's engagement and retained until the termination.

In cases of misconduct the following procedure should be followed :—

(*a*) *Absenteeism.*—If a man is late presenting himself for work or returns late after an allowance time or meal hour or absents himself from his work without permission, another man may be employed in his stead and the first man shall not be entitled to his Registration Book until he has given a satisfactory explanation or until the job is finished.

(*b*) *Abuse, Neglect of work, Pilfering and other forms of Misconduct.* — The employer should retain the Registration Book and report the case immediately to the Port Labour Inspector, who after hearing the statements of both employer and workman, may either allow the Registration Book to be returned to the man or may forward the Book to the Committee for a decision whether same should be withdrawn or temporarily suspended.

9. *Following on Employment.*

A registered man engaged for discharging or loading a ship is entitled and is required to retain his employment until the completion of the work for which he was engaged.

10. *Interruption of Engagement.*

Interruption of engagement on account of causes not under the control of the Employer or Worker (*e.g.* non-arrival of cargo or orders, stowage, lack of funds, etc.—but not including stress of weather) shall be dealt with as follows :—

The employer shall decide whether :—

(*a*) He will retain the Registration Books, in which case the men will be entitled to payment in respect of the following day or half-day, or

(*b*) He will return the Registration Books, in which case the men will be free to seek other work.

If the latter method is adopted, the original men shall be given preference of employment when the work is restarted.

11. *Exchange of Registration Books.*

Registration Books to be exchanged at six-monthly intervals. No fresh book to be issued to any man who cannot satisfy the Committee as to the reason of his inability to obtain a reasonable amount of work. The test to be imposed at each exchange of books shall be decided by the Committee one month before the date on which the exchange is scheduled to commence.

12. *Transferring Books.*

Any man transferring a Registration Book, or fraudulently obtaining work by the use of a Registration Book, of which he is not the *bona fide* holder, shall be reported to the Committee.

13. *Lost Books.*

Any Employer or Worker losing a Registration Book will be required to pay the sum of 1s.

14. *Breach of Regulations.*

Any breach of the regulations regarding the employment of non-registered men, or the discontinuance of work before the completion of an engagement on the part of either Employer or Worker, shall be reported to the Committee.

APPENDIX V

DOCK INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION—HAMBURG.

DURING the second half of the nineteenth century various attempts were made to organize Unions amongst the dockers without much success. The report of an investigation which followed the great strike in 1897 states that the methods of engaging labour were three—looking round for work, waiting in the streets and waiting in taverns. As dock traffic increased middlemen arose who contracted to carry on the work and signed on the labour. This system was strongly condemned by the Commission. Progress was also retarded by the absence of co-operative machinery amongst the employers. The first serious attempt at organization was that of the Employment Agency of the Hamburg-America Line, out of which grew the larger organization later. All workmen who desired employment as trimmers or as quayside workers had to possess a card issued by the Agency, and labour for the first time was divided into categories.

This development extended over a wider field, and led to the formation of the Dock Industry Association in May, 1906. This organization included the Hamburg Shipowners' Association, the Hamburg Shipbrokers' and Agents' Association and the Hamburg-Altona Trimmers' Union. In the course of time it expanded until all dock employers were included. The D.I.A.

comprises the whole of the dock labour, with the exception of workmen on Government quays. The workmen are divided according to the degree of permanency. Three groups may be distinguished. First, men who are permanently employed in the same trade, sometimes called Fixed Labourers. Second, men not permanently employed, but available to reinforce the permanent men when required. These are known as Assistant Labourers and constitute the largest group. Many of them find permanent work in different trades, while the employment of the remainder depends upon fluctuations of work in the Port. There is a third class who are only employed in periods of heavy traffic. Such generally quit the Dock industry when the rush is over, and return again when work is available. These are known as the Casual Workers.

Control of labour supply is effected by the issue of cards, and only men in possession of these cards can obtain work in the docks. The cards are in different colours according to occupations:

Trimmers and Quay workers—Yellow.
Coal and Bunkermen—Green.
Warehousemen—Red.
Ship's Cleaners and Boiler Cleaners—Orange.

The number of cards issued is based upon the number of men required during periods of medium traffic. All holders of these cards must be engaged before any unregistered workers are taken on. If the supply of card workers is not sufficient an additional supply of labour is obtained from the State Labour Exchange which is situated in the dock area, and keeps a section in their books with some experience of dock labour known as occasional workers. These are sent by the

Exchange to the Association's Call Stand requiring the additional workers and these receive special temporary cards.

All other labour is engaged at the Association Stands. There are thirteen calling-on offices situated in various parts of the docks, and all connected up by telephone to the principal office. Each office caters for a different set of occupations, and card workers are attached to one of these offices at their own choice. The permanent men report direct to their employers. All the others are required to attend at the Call Office to which they are attached. Calls take place as follows :—

Calling-on Time.	*Shift.*
6— 7 a.m.	7. 0 a.m.— 3.30 p.m.
10—12 noon.	3.30 p.m.—11.30 p.m.
3— 6 p.m.	11.30 p.m.— 7. 0 a.m.

Upon engagement the men's cards are exchanged by the foremen for a ticket bearing the name of the employer to whom they have to report. This ticket is handed to the employer, who later returns it to the office in exchange for the card. At the end of the job he returns the card to the worker.

Card workers who fail to obtain work but who have attended the call have their books stamped at the time in proof of unemployment, and this is accepted as evidence in respect of State benefit to which they are entitled.

Permanent men are paid by the employer. All others are paid by the Association. Arrangements exist by which wages are paid daily at the Association Offices after working hours. On the termination of an engagement a wage cheque is handed to the worker along with his card. This is cashed at the Pay Office after deductions have been made for Unemployment and Sickness benefit. In respect of the latter the men hold sickness benefit cards, to which contribution stamps are affixed. The Pay Office then pass on to the employer an account of the wages paid and collect the total sum, plus a percentage addition to meet the cost of administration.

This is a very brief outline of an important experiment in decasualization, and it is generally acknowledged to be one of the most successful. The casual class still remains, but they have been so segregated as to become a part of the problem of general unemployment. In times of good trade they disappear from the docks. The far-reaching changes in Germany now taking place are bound to have reactions upon the D.I.A., and it is impossible at the moment to foresee the direction of future developments.

The Port Labour Reserve—Rotterdam.

As stated in the text, the Port of Rotterdam is singularly well situated as an experimenting centre in decasualization. It is accessible at all states of the tides, and in addition to her sea-going traffic there is always a large river traffic from the Rhine. All the Port Labour employers are organized under the Shipping Association (South), and one of its subsidiary institutions is the Port Labour Reserve (Haven Arbeids Association) which comprises two registry offices for the engagement of labour situated one on each side of the River Maas.

The scheme was first launched in 1916 and is now firmly established. The trade union element is not strong. This seems to be due to certain differences in the function and relation of the Trade Union Movement in Holland compared with this country and to the initiative shown by the employers in facing the problem. The scheme deals with Registration, Weekly Payment of Wages and provision against Unemployment and Sickness.

Registration.—All dockers engaged in handling cargoes and auxiliary occupations must be taken on by the Association, and penalties are imposed in event of any employer infringing the regulations. Workers are classified into three grades, Permanent, Assistant and Casual. Three kinds of books are used, containing particulars of employment and earnings, along with a photograph of the holder for identification. Different colours distinguish the different groups.

1. Brown books for Permanent workers.
2. Blue books for Assistant workers.
3. Yellow books for Casual workers.

4. Yellow weekly cards are issued to casual workers who are engaged temporarily during a rush. If the last-named are retained for more than one week they are entered in Class 3. The register is subject to revision every three months, and as an inducement to seek work, blue books with poor records are exchanged for yellow books with good records. This proves an effective stimulus, since the blue book men obtain unemployment provision from the Association, while the yellow book holders are obliged to resort to the Municipality for relief. Practically all recruitment is through the lower grades, and once registered in the two first grades the docker will not be dismissed unless for disciplinary reasons. The method is causing

a rise in the average age of the register and so raising the same problem as has been raised in other ports where registration is effective. There are three calls daily :

Call Times.	*Shifts.*
7— 8 a.m.	8—12 noon or 8—1.30 p.m.
10—11 a.m.	12.30 p.m.— 6.30 p.m.
3— 4 p.m.	5.30 p.m.—11. 0 p.m.
	9.30 p.m.— 4. 0 a.m.
	2. 0 a.m.— 8. 0 a.m.

Men who have worked during the morning shift are allowed to attend a special call between 1.0 and 1.30 p.m., so as to give them a chance of a second shift. The call takes place in a large covered hall. The employers' foremen select their men, and they are assisted by an official of the Association who collects the books. After selection, the men are informed where and when to report for work and the number of shifts required. The foremen and the official then proceed to the office together, where the books are stamped by the firms' special stamps, and the particulars noted on a register which forms the basis of the organization's subsequent work. The foremen then take possession of the books until the men are discharged. In the case of men who do not obtain employment the books are stamped daily at the office in proof of unemployment at a specially arranged time. In this way a record of both employment and unemployment is made in the same book. This record is accepted as evidence by the Association in respect of the payment of unemployment benefit and also by the Municipality and the Trade Unions against payment of relief.

Payment of Wages.—All wages are paid weekly.

Permanent men are paid direct by the employer. The other groups are paid by the Association at their offices. The total sum due to each worker is computed in advance from records which are filed off the men's cards. When the men attend for payment they present their cards, and the sum paid is recorded there. The cards thus contain a complete record of employment, unemployment and wages. A reduction of 10 per cent. is made, payable by the men, in connection with a State Sickness Insurance Scheme by arrangement between the Government and the Association. During the succeeding week the employers send in a list of the men who have worked for them and the amount due in wages. The Association note the personal records, check the list against the amount recorded as paid, and make any necessary adjustments on the following pay day.

Unemployment and Sickness Benefits.—Holders of Blue books whose actual earnings are under Fl.20 (about £1 13s. 4d.) are allowed 70 per cent. of the difference between their earnings and this amount in addition to the Fl.20. If totally unemployed for the week they get 70 per cent. of Fl.20, *e.g.* Fl.14. This provision is made by the Association out of funds which are raised by a general charge upon the employers. The scheme is restricted to the Blue book holders who are obliged to attend all calls, and enforcement of this rule is secured by withdrawing such payments temporarily if the worker shows continued periods of unemployment. In the case of the other grades, by special arrangement between the Association and the Municipality, relief is afforded. Sickness Insurance is also available by arrangement with the Government, who administer a State scheme through the Association. Sick workers in the Port Labour Reserve obtain 80 per cent. of the minimum weekly wage during incapacity up to a maximum period of twenty-six weeks. Many of the men insure privately against the remaining 20 per cent. Contributions from employers and workers are collected by the Association as already explained. The Association employs a doctor who has his consulting room and surgery on the premises. He settles all questions relating to benefit claims that may be in doubt. Permanent and Blue book men are allowed three days' holiday annually with full pay at the cost of the employers.

Rotterdam is recognized to be one of the most comprehensive and successful schemes in operation. It contains many of the principles laid down by the Shaw Report, although the composition of the organizing body differs from the type suggested therein. The scheme is administered largely on autocratic lines, but by careful and sympathetic development those responsible have gradually acquired the confidence of both parties. In the case of Permanent and Blue book men, complete decasualization has been achieved, while the casual (Yellow book) workers are employed when work is available, without having to hang around indefinitely in the vain hope of picking up something.

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